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Theme:

CASTE IN CHURCH AND NATION

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FINDINGS OF CONSULTATIONS

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EDITORIAL

Historical

Historically, the Church's first encounter with the caste system in India was when a large number of *Paravas* became Christians. This was due to the missionary work of Francis Xavier. It took place on the west coast of South India as early as the middle of the 16th century. These *Paravas* who were fishers by caste became Christians, it is reported, in order to seek the protection of Portugal against Mohammedan sea rovers.[1] Thus, the first reaction of the evangelist was how best to take advantage of this Hindu social pattern of caste grouping in order to win converts into the Church. This strategy seemed justified by later history in the rapid expansion of the Church in so-called mass movement areas. Bishop Pickett's remarkable study of mass movements is really an effort to understand the caste system only in so far as it was related to the task of conversion of the outcaste groups.[2]

The 'Adaptation' strategy of Robert Nobili, earlier on in the history of Roman Christianity in India, was also due to the same concern.[3] This was in the beginning of the 17th century. He felt that if only Brahmins could be assured that conversion did not involve the giving up of caste, large numbers of them would become Christians and enter the Church. A bitter controversy ensued. It took on huge proportions and Rome was requested to make a decision on what was a vital issue. One result of this controversy was that although it was very clearly indicated that Christians could not accept the flagrantly unchristian aspects of caste customs and observances, every effort should be made in India to make Christianity indigenous to the country.[4] The question seemed to have boiled down to this: How much of the rigid social regulations associated with caste could be observed within the fellowship of the Church?

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[1] Stephen Neill, *Builders of the Indian Church*, p. 39.

[2] J. W. Pickett, *Christian Mass Movements in India.* (Abingdon Press), 1933.

[3] Julius Richter, *A History of Christian Missions in India*, p. 58 ff.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 69.

Protestant Missions in the South began when Roman Christians were seeking an answer to this question. From the very first days of the Danish Missionaries in the 18th century, the Lutheran Church was confronted by the caste issue *within* the Church. Diverse opinions seemed to have been held by Missionaries themselves. In part, this was due to a misunderstanding of the nature of the caste system. For caste customs were generally regarded as non-religious, though some of them were considered to be difinitely unchristian. The feeling on the whole was that in process of time Christian converts would learn to give them up. But stern measures were to be taken meanwhile against practices which appeared to be flagrantly opposed to Christian values.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that many unchristian caste customs have persisted all these six centuries, both with the Roman Catholic and the Protestant Churches. To some extent it is due to a defeatist feeling that it is almost impossible to eradicate caste "habits" especially in areas of mass movement accessions where converts came in as groups and did not totally abandon many of their caste customs. Moreover, the real difficulty was how to discriminate between what could be considered as definitely unchristian about these customs and to what extent they could be regarded as part of an Indian's cultural heritage. More recently, even with the Hindu community it is becoming very difficult to distinguish between what may be considered as purely social and what could be regarded as determinatively Hindu about caste observances. Added to this changing situation in the last generation is the new factor of nationalism. New emphasis was laid upon the need for Christians to be rooted in the cultural heritage of India. This has led to further confusion of issues, for the problems created by caste within the Church, instead of being tackled as problems in their own right, became side-tracked by much talk of indigenisation.

Casteism—The Problem of the Present

Any worthwhile discussion of the Church's approach to caste today requires that we deal not with past history but with the living present. It is not necessary for us in this Editorial to spell out or deal at length with the new ideas and forces that have laid the axe at the root of the traditional caste system. There is on the one hand modern India's ideal of a casteless pattern of socialist society and her many efforts to realise the same ; on the other hand, far-reaching changes are taking

place in Hindu religion and its social outlook. There is no doubt, as a result of it all, the caste system is changing. However, there has also been a strange recrudescence of what is now described as "casteism" or "caste-spirit". Casteism is the problem of the present, that is, the problem of the persistence of the caste spirit although the caste structure may be demolished. What gives concern to our national leaders is the anti-social character of the caste attitude, and the increasing tendency for politicians to exploit their caste groups towards local ends which are destructive of national unity. What is deplored is the inherent tendency in the caste system to develop what we have long known as "communalism". In pre-Independence days communalism was associated with religions. Religious groups set themselves as separate political entities and sought to work for power and position in the State. With the acceptance of the ideal of the secular State, fortunately, such communalism has weakened. But after Independence, the trend has been towards a new sort of group-consciousness based upon caste loyalties. And it is evident that caste communalism is as dangerous as religious communalism. It also results in separatism and vested interests. Each group talks of safeguarding its rights and privileges; individuals in the group come to believe that only in securing the interests of their group that they are secure. The tragic part of it is that such communalism is not so much interested in self-development in the context of freedom for all to have such opportunity. Rather, it is based on a crass selfishness which would want to grow at the expense of the other, to expand as a group by exploiting other groups, to assume powers of leadership in order to subjugate and enfeeble other groups. Thus, casteism is a threat to the wholeness of national being and prevents the growth of national unity.

Something like the caste group consciousness has developed within the Church also, creating group vested interests and power struggles within it and threatening the true sense of Christian fellowship. What we have within the Church is not the original caste grouping, but a strange mixture of consciousness of cultural traditions, language, native place, social origin, regional loyalty and denominational background, with the sense of social origin dominant. It is in this way that Syrian Christians of Kerala for instance, form a "caste", the Nadars claim to be a separate Christian group as against the Vellalas in Tamilnad and the Malas differentiated from the Madigas in Andhra Pradesh.

Sardar K. M. Panikkar in his *Hindu Society at Crossroads* pointedly draws attention to the social divisiveness of caste: "The theory of Hindu social life does not accept the idea of a community for it is based on division, not on unity. But during the last few decades new ideas have entered Hindu life, and the idea of community has taken root as a result both of opposition to other integrated communities like Islam and Christianity and of the penetration of Western thought....It meant of necessity the importation into Hindu social life the new doctrine of integration, not based on *chaturvarnya* but a single Hindu people."[5] This is a revealing statement. The alternative to caste is "a single Hindu people". What Panikkar pleads for is the realisation of a *secular* Hindu *community*. The argument of his book is "that the translation of the idea of the community from the realm of the mind to the realm of activity through the modification of laws has now been rendered possible both by the awakening of the Hindu mind and by the existence of an effective machinery of legislation entitled to general obedience and capable of enforcing it." Panikkar is convinced that society is wholly subject to human ordering, that social institutions can be modified radically through legislation, and that this new social order can be brought into being through State action, without reference to religious sentiment.

This is an extreme position taken by some social reformers who assume that caste regulations have no religious sanctions whatsoever. On the other hand, the position of Hindu religious leaders is different. They are agreed that, whatever changes may be expedient, the *chaturvarnya* scheme of society should not be totally discarded, as it is based on Hindu conceptions of man and creation and so closely related to the Hindu religion. The Jagadguru of Kamakoti Pitham voices the opinion of enlightened Hindu orthodoxy when he says: "The system has been devised for the smooth functioning of society. It was a functional division, each man doing his allotted duty and all contributing to the general welfare of the community. According to the nature of the function, the nature of food, daily *anushthanas* and ways of life were adopted....The origin of the troubles (among caste folk) could be traced to egoism, one caste regarding itself as superior to another. Caste consciousness can be eradicated only if one is filled with regard for

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[5] K. M. Panikkar, *Hindu Society at Crossroads*, p. 94.

dharma, and with *bhakti* and *jnana.* When people in high places plead for the abolition of caste, they must also at the same time plead for an increase in *dharma, bhakti* and *jnana.* By merely crying that caste distinctions should go, they would be only accentuating the distinctions."[6] There is truth in this argument, because State legislation may abolish discriminatory social institutions, but that does not create in people the right attitude towards fellowmen. Much less generate a real concern in the other's well-being, such a neighbourliness as is illustrated by the Parable of the Good Samaritan. The Samaritan, unlike the priest and the levite, was not caste-conscious ; he recognized in the stricken wayfarer a brother man.

A number of modern Hindu exponents of the *Bhagavad Gita* have more recently laid stress on the concepts of *svadharma* and *lokasamgraha* as basic to the Hindu idea of caste. This new stand emphasizes, on the one hand, the value of the individual and the urge to fulfilment of the human person (*svadharma*), and on the other, the "holding together of people" (*lokasamgraha*) in the sense of community-fellowship and human solidarity. Whatever else of the caste system may go, these values should be conserved in Hindu social life, modern Hindu religious leaders insist. The *Sarvodaya* social philosophy and ethic are undoubtedly based on these two ideals : freedom for the individual to be himself, and the network of human relations which makes for the welfare of all.

To realize both these ends there is need for social legislation as well as a "change of heart". To neglect the one at the expense of the other, is to court disaster. Legislation by itself will only make religious prejudice resent reform, and result in reactionary movements such as that of the Sanatanists. Likewise, religious idealism by itself cannot combat social evils, for, the tendency in the religious approach is to think of the externals of human expression in behaviour as irrelevant to the inward spiritual achievement of God-realization. Probably it is because some modern Hindu intellectuals realize the necessity of both State effort and the quickening of conscience by devotion to religious ideals, that they are rediscovering and reformulating the *Gita* teaching on *Karma Yoga,* as relevant to the contemporary move towards "a socialistic pattern of society". It is to accord with this new ideal that the traditional caste social order is sought to be revised.

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[6] *The Call of the Jagadguru,* p. 132 ff.

A Christian Approach

What then should be the attitude of the Christian today in regard to the changing pattern of caste ? In the first place, we should not exploit the present confused caste situation for securing any undue advantage for winning converts to the Christian religion. We should severely avoid any disparaging reference to a system which has ceased to be rigid and ruthless. If at all caste persists in Hindu society in old and new forms, it should only make us Indian Christians penitent, for, the caste spirit persists among our own people.

Secondly, we need to realise that Christians and Hindus alike are involved in the nation's common struggle to free itself from the stranglehold of the new form of communalism, the caste spirit of separatism. Moral idealism has found itself powerless before it. The more we proclaim the ideal of a casteless society, the more tough casteism becomes. The need today is patient study of the reasons which give caste and caste spirit such power. There is evidence that the nation is securing the aid of psychology, sociology and other social sciences in this effort to understand. Christians too should be concerned with the scientific diagnosis of the caste situation in India. No doubt, Christianity believes that no social problem can be diagnosed adequately except in terms of the spirit (self-transcendence) of man which rebels against God and seeks self-justification and self-defence in ideology and false worship. But too often, Christians have presented the spiritual interpretation of evil in purely pietistic, moralistic or individualistic terms and ignored the corporate and cosmic character of sin. If today we can enter the ongoing discussion of secular social scientists and Hindu religious thinkers and show the relevance of the distinctly Christian understanding of man for social diagnosis it may help deepen the nation's understanding of modern Indian society. In this context, we shall also be able to help define *svadharma* and *lokasamgraha* in terms of scientific realism and Biblical faith. But we have to go a long way if we are to be able to make this contribution to national life.

Thirdly, Christians in India must demonstrate that within the fellowship of the Christian Church, they are able to counter the forces of the "caste spirit" or else we belie the claim that we make for the transforming power of Christian *koinonia*. The three strategic points at which the Christian fellowship should manifest its power over caste and caste spirit

within the Church are the Lord's Table, the Local Congregation and the Christian Home.

At the Lord's Table where Christians worship, there can be no caste barrier. There is need in the Indian Church to give more importance to the significance of the corporate character and claim of Christian worship. The Biblical understanding of the worshipping community as the Body of Christ will have to be driven home to Christian conscience as contrasted with our Hindu heritage of collective solitariness in worship. In true worship man discovers his humanity in his kinship with God and men, perhaps nowhere so as at the Communion rails.

The significance of the local congregation has been brought to the fore in recent times. It is the more easily recognisable unit of the worldwide Church which bears witness to the reality of Christian fellowship in the local context of everyday circumstance. True, Christian *koinonia* is not to be equated with the community of but-too-human men and women who constitute the local congregation. Nevertheless, it is as a gathered group of Christians in a locality they consciously seek to reflect in their community life the transforming power of Christian *koinonia* (fellowship). In the Indian setting, however, the local congregation has not been successful in providing an adequate sense of fellowship to the individual because of two wrong notions : that the local congregation is primarily the local administrative unit of a larger ecclesiastical machinery ; and that it is only a gathering of the Christians of a locality assembled for regular acts of worship. The idea of a close-knit fellowship of persons bound by a conscious sense of belonging together is not accorded the central place that it ought to be given in our understanding of the local congregation. Only then in such a fellowship, men and women will find sense of security, become conscious of their worth and realize their interdependence. At the same time there is need for specific guidance for the members of the local congregation in matters of social conduct, and the Church should not hesitate to state unequivocally what is obviously un-Christian in prevailing patterns of human behaviour and accepted social institutions. Dr. John McKenzie has rightly observed that "one of the great needs of the Church in India—and not only in India—is for a system of Christian *dharma*".[7] By this he means "a system of conventions which shall form the normal and natural

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[7] John McKenzie, *The Two Religions*, p. 56.

channels in which Christian love shall flow". Evangelists who have had long experience of work among mass movement converts are all agreed that there is need for such unambiguous guidance authoritatively given by the Church in regard to Christian conduct. Having been long used to caste regulations, these village people find that they have no definite standards of reference when it comes to making moral decisions. Naturally, they fall back on the caste customs in which they had been brought up, which still determines the social behaviour of those amongst whom they live.

The last word in this whole discussion will have to deal with the most significant manifestation of group life, which is the family. The Christian contribution can be really effective in checkmating the caste spirit if through the influence of the Christian family it is clearly demonstrated that loyalty to the smaller unit of the family is not to be regarded as exclusive and self-contained but as a training for the larger life of the local community, the State, the nation and the world. It is in the family that the individual may grow into the experience of the demands of the basic common humanity of man and the close interdependence of men in realizing the common good.

We talk in our country today of the changing pattern of family life, because we realize that there are already certain unsettling forces at work in Indian society. The joint-family is fast changing ; marriages are still arranged by elders, but the young people involved have an increasing say in the matter ; small unit families are the order in the cities and larger towns. This new state of affairs has brought in its wake the need for new standards of conduct. The democratic outlook characteristic of this generation calls for a new understanding of the relation between men and women in society, between parents and children in the home, between teachers and students in the school. Problems of freedom and discipline, of sex and equality, of rights and obligations, in the context of the changing social order, are faced in the family which is really the basic unity of society. If right adult attitudes are to be developed we need to begin with the children in the home. Likewise the influence of right social conduct as expressed in the local setting of the Christian home can be very effective in shaping public opinion in the neighbourhood. In the campaign against the evils of caste spirit and communalism the Christian home can be a veritable spearhead of attack.

CASTE IN TRANSITION*

By A. P. Barnabas, *Allahabad*

Introduction

Every society recognises differences of status among its members. In some societies, the stratification is so rigid that it is almost impossible for one to change his status. In others, mobility is not too difficult. The caste system is one of the more rigid forms of social stratification.

The caste system has been defined as follows: "A caste may be defined as an endogamous, and hereditary subdivision of ethnic unit occupying a position of superior or inferior rank or social esteem in comparison with such other divisions." (*Encyclopædia of Social Sciences.*) Two other definitions may also be noted: "A collection of families or a group of families bearing a common name, claiming a common descent from a mythical ancestor, human or divine, professing to follow the same hereditary calling, and regarded by those who are competent to give an opinion as forming a single homogeneous community." (Risley.) "An endogamous group, or collection of endogamous groups bearing a common name, membership of which is hereditary arising from birth alone, imposing upon its members certain restrictions in the matter of social intercourse, either (1) a common traditional occupation, or (2) claiming a common origin, or (3) both following such an occupation and claiming such an origin and generally regarded as forming a single homogeneous community." (Blunt.)

The definitions have been given as they give a clue to the features of the caste system. To discover whether the caste system is undergoing change, it would be necessary to understand the various features of the caste system and analyse whether any of them are changing. This is the only way to see whether the caste system is really in transition.

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* This is the modified form of a paper circulated among the participants of the Madura Consultation on *Caste and Its Alternatives.* Sri. A. P. Barnabas is Associate Professor, Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology, Allahabad Agricultural Institute.

Features of the Caste System

Restrictions of Food.—There are minute rules as to what sort of food should be taken and with what castes. There is an elaborate code as to what castes can eat with what castes, *kachha* food (cooked in water) and *pakka* food (cooked in ghee). Similarly, rules exist regarding drinking of water. In certain parts of the country, Brahmins will not take even water from other castes. There are even restrictions as to what can be eaten; certain castes are forbidden to eat meat, onion, garlic, beet root, etc.

Restrictions on Marriages.—Two of the definitions given above clearly indicate the endogamous nature of the caste. Prof. Ghurye: "Most of the groups (castes) are further divided into a number of subgroups, everyone of which forbids its members to marry persons from outside it. Each of these groups popularly known as subgroups is thus endogamous." This is one of the most dominant aspects, particularly of the sub-caste. The usual punishment for those who break this rule of endogamy is expulsion from the caste, *i.e.*, social ostracism.

Other Restrictions.—In Uttar Pradesh, the highest caste in the village will occupy the central part of the village. The next in rank will be in the immediate neighbourhood and the untouchables are outside the main village. There are restrictions as to what type of vessels, clothes and jewellery should be used by those various castes. Further, there are definite forms in which the lower castes have to address the higher castes. Most lower castes in Uttar Pradesh would greet the Brahmins thus: "I touch your feet", and often do. There are regulations as to when the castes can draw water from the well. Actually, each caste would try to have a well within its residential area. Temples are also exclusive.

Exclusiveness.—As a result of the restrictions, the castes tend to become exclusive. As K. M. Panikkar says, "Primarily it (caste) has tended to subdivide the social organism in such a way as to make the units smaller and smaller and unrelated to the general society. Thus it *denies the entire theory of community* and bases the organisation of Hindu life on the opposite principle of disintegration and division." He further states that the Hindu in practice recognises no society or community beyond the extended joint-family (sub-caste) in his social relations and his loyalties. Prof. Ghurye also says,

"It is the spirit of caste-patriotism which endangers opposition to other castes and creates an unhealthy atmosphere for the growth of national consciousness", thereby recognising the withdrawn loyalty of the caste.

Hereditary Occupation.—Two of the definitions indicate the hereditary occupational feature of the caste "professing to follow the same hereditary calling" (Risley), "following a common traditional occupation". (Blunt.) Every caste tends to regard some occupation as its own exclusive calling and tries to prevent others from engaging in the same occupation. While some have felt that endogamy is the essence of the caste, others have felt that the division of the society into occupational groups is the most prominent feature of the caste system. Whether the occupational division is the most important factor or not, none can deny the great influence of this division on the development of the caste. The rise of "sub-castes" has been attributed to further division of occupation within the major castes.

There are those who hold that the caste system has never succeeded in confining the castes to separate professions. Prof. Ghurye states, "....for there were groups of occupations like trading, agriculture, labouring in the fields, and doing military service which were looked upon as anybody's business, and most castes were supposed to be eligible for any of them. Among artisans, occupations which were more or less of the same status were open to members of those castes without incidental degradation." Incidentally, it may be mentioned here that some of the occupations were supposed to be of higher calling.

Hierarchy.—"Everywhere in India there is a definite scheme of social precedence amongst the castes with the Brahmins at the head of the hierarchy." The restrictions of marriage, dining and of occupation are the consequences of the desire to maintain the "social precedence". As said earlier, some sort of hierarchy is present in every society. What makes the caste system different is that the status of the individual is fixed at birth and to some extent related to the occupation.

Authority.—In every caste there exists within it an organisation with varying degree of power, "which compels obedience of the caste members". In some castes there is a very formal rigid organisation. In others, particularly among Brahmins and some other high castes, there is only an informal

organisation which gets together occasionally and the way they exercise authority is to create public opinion. These organisations are called "panchayats" and are referred to as caste-panchayats. Each sub-caste and at times even sub-sections of it tend to have a panchayat of its own. Gisbert, describing the functions of these panchayats, says, "....it acts more frequently as a court to give the judgement and apply the penalty in such cases as adultery, violation of the marriage law, refusal to maintain a wife, immorality and concubinage, breaches of any prescribed taboos, the exercise of an unauthorised occupation, or trade, killing of a sacred animal, especially the cow, insulting a Brahmin, or any other action or omission which may bring disrepute to the caste or threaten its solidarity and welfare."

Segmental Division of Society.—Each caste lives for itself and in itself. The loyalty of the caste members does not go beyond the caste. The restrictions in marriage and dining have been referred to. Each sub-caste has its own authority structure. The result of it all is the division of the people into small units which, according to Panikkar, "render the development of any common social feeling impossible. In fact, it is the negation of the idea of society". He further states, "There can be no denying that the organisation of the Hindu life on the basis of the sub-caste or the joint-family extinguishes the social sense, the feeling of obligation to a social whole and thereby render the conception of a unified Hindu society impossible." The caste system thus divides society into segments.

New Factors of Change and New Forms of Caste Exclusiveness

There is a general feeling prevailing that the caste system is on the wane and it is just a matter of time before we bury the system. However, there is a section which tries to draw attention to the fact that caste and casteism are still dominant forces. To be able to decide whether the system of caste is on its last legs or whether it is still a strong force, there is need to study the factors which are influencing the caste system. It is further necessary to see how these factors are changing the features of the system which have been elaborated.

(1) *Political Factors.—The Constitution of India* recognises the fundamental rights of freedom and social equality. It declares that the State shall strive to promote social welfare, accept the full implications of democracy and develop an order in which justice is based on equality. These principles under-

mine the very foundation of the caste system. By indicating that the goal of the nation is to establish a socialistic pattern of society (however vague and nebulous the phrase) the Government of India basically cuts at the very root of the ideas on which the caste is built.

As a direct result of the Constitution, the following factors have emerged influencing the caste structure of society. Acceptance of the democratic form of government naturally implies *adult franchise*. The result of adult franchise has been that many social groups have become aware of their strength and realise that they are in a position to wield power. A Seminar on Casteism held in New Delhi noted: "Adult franchise which prevails today means that a great number of votes are cast in favour of an elector's caste. This is explicitly recognised during elections." Even the Communists in Andhra Pradesh tried to find candidates who had the proper "social base". Since voting is on a caste basis, the voters do not understand that it is immoral to demand that the elected minister help his caste folk. Hence, corruption and nepotism are rampant. Secular *political parties* ought to cut across caste. But a study of the factions in parties and the various troubles of State ministries will easily show that they are manifestations of casteism. Prof. Srinivas, in his closing address at the Seminar in Delhi, remarked, "Mysore is no longer ruled by the mythical Mahishasura, but the very real demon Varnasura....no explanation of provincial politics in any part of India is possible without reference to caste."

The establishment of *panchayats* is another consequence. Here again, each caste has become conscious of the power it can wield. The members are selected to the panchayat very often on the basis of caste. There is always an attempt to see that the various caste groups are represented in the *panchayat*. There is nothing wrong in this. But the members vote on various issues not from the view-point of the total community but of exclusive caste interests. However, establishment of the panchayat has helped to bring representatives of all the castes together in one organisation which ultimately may help in developing a sense of community. The caste panchayats are still strong and in social behaviour people are conscious of the necessity to abide by caste rules to escape ostracism.

(2) *Fight against Untouchability.*—Untouchability is the worst feature of the caste system. If the caste system had not developed it, there may have been many more who would have

upheld the system. The Government at the Centre and in the States are doing all they can to remove untouchability. The measures taken are legislative work, anti-touchability propaganda, provision for wells, stipends and scholarships for education, etc. The Untouchability Act passed by the Union Government is applicable to all States. In most States special efforts are made to give employment to the Harijans. As a result of these efforts, the educational standard of the Harijans has gone up. As there is more education, their economic condition has also improved, but these have not changed their social status. "Turning to the social side of the problem, we have to strike a different note....The various enactments, both of the Central and State Governments which, though necessary, cannot be said to have achieved their object. Unless there is a thorough change of heart on the part of the caste Hindus, it is well nigh impossible for the Harijans to enjoy the equal status granted to them under the law of the land," says the Secretary of the Madras Harijan Sevak Sangh.

Untouchability has been abolished by law. Many other legislative enactments are intended to give equal status to all the citizens. No doubt, legislation alone does not change society ; and social laws affecting the caste system should be viewed at best as no more than the definition of ultimate objectives to be achieved. In spite of the laws, the practices continue. Laws which give greater status to the Harijans are passed by the higher caste members of the legislative assemblies, because they have to show sympathy with the ideals set by the Congress Party and also because the Harijans have strong voting power. Social reformation is voted more for convenience rather than from conviction. As Prof. Srinivas aptly points out, there is overt acceptance of the legislation, but covert sabotage. It may be of interest to note that there is a move afoot in Varanasi to build another Vishwanath temple on private property (so that Government cannot interfere) now that the original temple has been "polluted" by the entry of Harijans. In a village which I studied, 50 per cent of all the population and 75 per cent of Harijans did not know that Harijans could enter temples. Actually, 40 per cent thought it was wrong to allow Harijans to enter temples. In a "model village" built by Uttar Pradesh government, the Harijan Colony was about two furlongs away from the main village.

(3) *Economic Development.*—The developments of transport and communications, of industries and industrial urban

centres, and of new patterns of economic organisation are factors which tend to minimise the rigidity of the caste system. In trains and buses, in cities and factories, in hotels, cinema halls and clubs, people are thrown together irrespective of caste. And it has influenced their outlook.

Nevertheless, physical proximity has not resulted in social intercourse across caste boundaries in any large measure. The emergence of hostels, clubs, housing societies, etc., exclusively for particular castes, are emerging in urban centres. The insidious effect of caste is visible even in trade unions and employers' organisations. A study of trade unions in a Mysore textile mill clearly showed the influence of caste in the membership and activities of the different unions. The co-operative movement has not succeeded in India, mainly because of casteism. Only caste co-operatives have done well. Even the Community Projects have tended to have a caste colour because of the type of targets which cater only to agriculturists. Even the village workers like to have social intercourse with those who will bring them social status, that is, the higher castes.

A study of industrial workers in Bombay conducted by Dr. Prabhu revealed that the workers were "mostly against practices of caste discrimination". However, 50 per cent objected to inter-caste marriages. Seventy per cent were willing to eat with lower castes and 73 per cent to invite lower castes to dine in their own houses. In the village study referred to earlier, 36 per cent said that it was good to have a hotel in the village, but 52 per cent thought it bad as it would destroy caste discipline.

New occupations, *i.e.*, those that were not in the caste hierarchy, are said to be weakening the caste system. Due to industrialisation, many new types of occupations have come into being. Apart from this, professions like medicine, engineering, law, etc., are open to any individual regardless of his caste. Land reforms have enabled more people to become agriculturists. However, the question whether engaging in a new occupation raises the status of an individual still remains. According to the 1951 Census, of the 5·13 crores of Scheduled Castes, 3·81 were agriculturists, and 1·32 non-agriculturists. Only 64 lakhs were engaged in occupations that could be described as those reserved for untouchables such as leather work. The problem of casteism continues even with the change of occupations.

(4) *Higher Education.*—Higher education has been a solvent of caste prejudices in India. Most of the movements of social reform are naturally led by the educated classes who have imbibed new social ideals in the colleges and universities. "The impact of thought has the most devastating force on social institutions." Nevertheless, its effects should not be exaggerated. The educated may have taken a good part of their life and activities outside the sphere of caste. But they still keep the more intimate core of their social life within caste. One needs only to turn to matrimonial advertisements, where doctors, engineers, higher Government officials, foreign-returned, all indicate their caste and require brides of the same castes. Even the "highly cultured" and "educated" brides want bridegrooms within their own caste. There are exceptions, to be sure, but they are few and far between. Two classmates of different castes may eat together in a hotel but will not usually be able to eat in each other's house.

To sum up : With the coming of independence, new organisations, and new movements have come into being. It was expected that these organisations would help people rise above exclusive caste feelings. Unfortunately, the trend seems to be for people to use these organisations to strengthen one's own caste.

The Hold of Caste on People

It has been pointed out that caste is real and casteism is earnest even in this secular democratic republic of ours, which has as its goal the socialistic pattern of society. The cause of the strength of the caste system needs to be shown. I can do no better than to quote extensively from Ramkrishna Mukerjee. Answering the question as to what supplied the *social force* to the village community, he says : "The answer to this question lies in the fact that besides its self-sufficient and autonomous character, and the simplicity of its organization which as stated before stabilised the village community system in the economic sphere and maintained the villages as independent units in society *vis-a-vis* the outer world, internally the village communities were stabilised by the peculiar development of the Indian social structure on the basis of the caste system. For it was the *jati* division of society which provided the internal mechanism of the village community system and stabilised it socially and ideologically. In the village communities, it was a social need that the village units do not burst asunder because of tensions generated within them by contra-

dictory aspirations of the people in social and material life, and this need was fulfilled by the caste ideology whereby everybody in society (however humbly or loftily placed) had a definite social spiritual position and specific work to do". Needless to point out that many elements indicated are still true and relevant.

To explain further: The most important reason for the persistence of the system is that it fulfils some of the basic needs of human beings. According to W. I. Thomas, every individual has four basic needs, namely, the need for security, the need for recognition, the need for response, and the need for new experiences. The caste system by having an indrawn loyalty provides for social security. By coming to the aid of the members of the caste in times of economic need, the caste system has provided for economic security. At times even physical help is given. The need for security, social, economic and psychological is basic. The caste group provides for these. Without the mutual aid system provided by caste, many individuals would feel lost.

While the caste system does set up a hierarchy in society, yet it makes provision for the recognition of all the individuals regardless of status, in some form or other. The funeral pyre is lit by the *dom,* the lowest caste in the U.P. For the marriage to be propitious, the couple visit the *kumhar.* The midwife is always a *chamar.* The *barber* has many roles to play in the various ritual ceremonies. During times of Holi, the outcastes and the high castes play together. The result is that even the low caste groups feel that they are wanted. In the world of rituals, each step is necessary and the low castes have a part in most ritual ceremonies. Apart from this the obligation that upper castes have for the welfare of the lower castes, also helps in the lower castes having a sense of recognition.

Another basic need of a human being is that of wanting to belong and to be accepted. The loyalty of all the members of a caste group binds them together in mutual acceptance.

The fourth basic need, the desire for new experiences, the caste system does not have within it the ability to fulfil. By the various restrictions it puts on the people regarding occupation, marriage, etc., it actually diminishes the possibilities of new experiences. It may be that individuals in the caste system have got so conditioned that they are prepared to ignore

this need as the caste system is satisfying in so many other ways. It must be remembered, however, that in caste there is no particular restrictions regarding creative activities such as music, handwork, etc.

Conclusion

In this paper, first of all, the caste has been defined. The features of the caste system have been elaborated. The factors that are affecting the caste system have been described and an analysis has been made as to how they are affecting the caste system. What has been pointed out is that regardless of the many factors which are supposed to be disrupting the caste system, it has withstood all the onslaughts and it is still a force. It is strong and tenacious. From Buddha down to Mahatma Gandhi, many ardent religious workers and social reformers have tried to break the system. They have had only partial success. To believe that the demon of caste is about to die and all that is needed is to prepare for the funeral rites is to grossly underestimate the social forces that bind a caste group together and perpetuate casteism.

Lest the paper be considered a prophecy of doom, it shall end with a note of hope. In closing the Seminar on Casteism in Delhi, Prof. Srinivas, the Director, observed, "On a short-term basis the country is more likely to have more trouble with caste while on a long-term basis, adult franchise, the industrial revolution which our five-year plans are hoping to bring about, the spread of literacy and higher education among the lower castes, the legal rights given to Harijans, the privileges given to backward castes, and greater Sanskritization of the way of life of the latter, should remove the more obnoxious features of the caste system gradually."

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TAMIL CHURCHES AND CASTE—A HISTORICAL SKETCH*

By D. Rajarigam, *Tranquebar*

It is unfortunate that the Christian Church is not yet free from caste prejudices in its own community life. There is need for Christians to demonstrate in their daily life that the Christian message of redemption has power over traditional social evils. Now, when the nation is seeking to find an alternative for caste, the Church has to come forward with its contribution. For it has pioneered in the past with experiments in new patterns of community life. It will be helpful, indeed, in this context, to study the Church's policy and practice regarding caste in the past.

The Roman Catholics

The Board for all world-wide missionary work of the Jesuit Mission, since the year 1622, is the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda. The policy adopted by Propaganda in 1659 reads in its instructions to missionaries: "Do not make any effort toward and do not for any reason persuade the people to change their customs unless they should be patently opposed to religion and moraliy. Do not impart these, but Faith which does not despise the uses and customs of any people provided they be not immoral. It desires, on the contrary, to see those preserved with all respect."[1]

At the time when the Jesuit missionaries started their mission work in India, caste prejudice was very acute. The missionaries, according to the policy of accommodation of Propaganda, accommodated the Church to caste. The Jesuits, thus, fully respected the caste system. Some of their number are entitled to high praise for becoming low castes among the low castes, dressing in their ragged clothes and eating their 'vile' food, but the high caste Jesuit would not even glance at his low caste colleague, if he met him on the road. The low

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* Part of a paper distributed for preparatory reading among the participants of Madura Consultation on *Caste and Its Alternatives*. It was discussed at the Consultation. Mr. Rajarigam is Principal of Gurusala (Lutheran Theological Seminary), Tranquebar.

[1] *An Outline of Missions*. By John Aberly (Philadelphia), 1945, pp. 47-48.

caste Christians were not allowed in the Church; they were herded in an enclosure by the side of it to hear the Mass, and the Sacraments were often administered to them through a window.[2]

Though their most extravagant practices were not perpetuated, the recognition which the pioneer Jesuits extended to caste was continued, and in our day it has been a source of much embarrassment to Church authorities in parts of South India. "Yet a modern Jesuit has written of caste as being a custom which should be allowed in the Church as having nothing in common with religion, or as capable of being easily separated from it."[3] It is no wonder, therefore, that the caste distinction is being tolerated today in the Roman Catholic Church.

The policy of the pioneer Jesuit missionaries has been one of the chief weaknesses of Roman Catholic Missions. But at the same time it must be noted that there is nothing wrong in the wording of the instructions given to missionaries. The instruction was that customs which belong to the soil, devoid of any religious significance, should be preserved with all respect. The mistake, therefore, lies with the missionaries who viewed caste as a harmless social custom without religious significance. Today they stand condemned by the Hindus themselves. For modern Hindus are convinced that true religion should contribute to the social dignity of man as a moral being and that caste is opposed to it.

The Lutherans

Regarding caste, Ziegenbalg, the first Lutheran missionary, was of the same opinion as the Jesuits that it was chiefly a social institution which could be tolerated to a certain extent, at least as long as it did not come in direct conflict with Christian principles. This attitude towards caste he left as a heritage to subsequent Lutheran missions in India.[4] The Lutheran missionaries winked at the distinction of caste, although not its sinfulness, in the hope that, by patiently bearing with it for a while it would gradually be dispelled by the

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[2] *A Candid History of the Jesuits.* By Joseph McCabe. (C. P. Putnam's Sons), 1913. Pp. 292-93.

[3] *Two Religions.* By John McKenzie. (Lutterworth Press, London), 1950. P. 29.

[4] *The Lutheran Enterprise in India.* (FELC), 1952. Pp. 6-7.

strong light of the Gospel shining upon their hearts. Their toleration only led to schisms and rebellions in course of time. Tanjore congregation of the early 19th century may be cited as an example in this context. Bishop Spencer, Bishop of Madras, during a visitation of the place in 1845, wrote :

"Generation after generation has sprung up, content, indeed, to be Christian on its own terms, but ever ready to resist when those terms were interfered with by the Missionary. Indeed, some of the caste Christians would almost lead you to imagine, from their conduct, that they fancied they were conferring a great favour on Christianity, by condescending to be called after the name of Christ."[5]

The Archdeacon of Madras reported in 1848 that the correction of the evils which grew up in the old Missions under the lax system of discipline, especially as regards caste, was found more difficult than the extension of the Gospel in new districts under the new system.[6]

Dr. S. Estborn observes regarding the attitude of the pioneer Lutheran missionaries towards caste : "It has proved a mixed heritage of good and evil."[7] It was good, perhaps, in the sense that it showed Christian sympathy to the caste Christians in their difficulty to shake off caste prejudice all on a sudden. The Lutheran Church, because of its tolerant spirit, did not lose the caste Christians, unlike the Anglican Church. Yet it had something evil in it. It fostered caste feelings to some extent by taking in those who seceded to it from the Anglican Church. But, at the same time, we should note that the patience of the Lutherans has been duly rewarded. There is no caste distinction today within the Tamil Lutheran Churches. That is to say, all the members sit, worship and commune together.

Others

The Anglicans, Congregationalists and other non-Lutheran Missions were, from the beginning, intolerant towards caste feelings in the Church. They considered it necessary to adopt stringent regulations against caste prejudices and tried to eradicate the evil implied in the caste system, though they had to pay a high price for it.

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[5] *Digest of the SPG Records* (1893), p. 513.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 513.

[7] *The Lutheran Enterprise in India*, p. 7.

The following had been and is their policy regarding caste: "Caste is so utterly contrary to the spirit of Christianity, so subversive of the fellowship of Christ's people, that it is greatly to be regretted that it should continue in the Church. The Lord's prayer that His people may all be one can never be fulfilled while caste remains among them. The Holy Spirit most certainly will not dwell in fulness where the spirit of caste is retained."[8]

The South India Missionary Conference, 1900, and the Indian Missionary Conference, 1902, resolved to discourage, repress and eradicate the evil of caste. The following is the resolution: The Conference would very earnestly emphasize the deliverance of the South India Missionary Conference of 1900, *viz.*, that caste, wherever it exists in the Church, "be treated as a great evil to be discouraged and repressed. It is further of opinion that in no case should any person who breaks the law of Christ by observing caste hold any office in connection with the Church, and it earnestly appeals to all Indian Christians to use all lawful means to eradicate so unchristian a system".[9]

This policy was adopted, already in 1847, by the English and the American missionaries. They took definite steps towards abolishing the caste evil, once and for all. They made the high and the low caste Christians, pastors and catechists dine together at common 'love-feasts' to prove that they had become one body in Christ Jesus. The consequence was a grave crisis for the Missions. At Madura, 72 persons, 38 of whom were catechists, were suspended. In the Pasumalai Seminary, practically the whole of the teachers and scholars were sent home. In many cases people from the lowest classes replaced the teachers who had left; and this did not contribute by any means towards the uplift of the Churches.[10]

Some English missionaries like W. Taylor, however, took care to ascertain the real place of caste in society, to be considerate to people who feared loss of society of relatives, friends and neighbours, to correct the evil, where such, by gentle means following St. Paul's method of dealing with Jewish

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[8] *Report of the Fourth Decennial Indian Missionary Conference* (1902), p. 27.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

[10] *A History of Missions in India.* By Julius Richter. (1908), p. 170.

converts. They considered the Indian caste society as something similar to the Western class society, and, therefore, deprecated hasty measures to root it out. The progress towards the universal acceptance of the New Testament principles would, they hoped, be gradual under Divine Providence. If they erred, they erred in good company.[11]

Caste Within the Church Today

In spite of the best efforts of the missionaries and Church leaders, caste has not yet been eradicated from the Tamil Church. Only its worst manifestations have vanished. Theoretically, the practice of showing distinction of caste is admitted by every one to be unchristian and yet, the evil still exists in insidious forms within the Christian community. At times of elections to Church committees, rival candidates who belong to different castes are set up and the whole procedure is tainted with the evil of caste-conscious attitudes. While posting pastors to parishes, Church leaders responsible for such postings take into consideration the origin of the members of the parishes and those of the pastors.[12] The managers of Church institutions show special favour to those belonging to their own castes.

In villages where all the Christians belong to one particular caste, there is no caste problem within the community. But, where there are inter-caste congregations, caste prejudices manifest themselves in many forms, subtle and otherwise. Whether one belongs to high or low caste, he is conscious of his origin and feels a loyalty to his caste group. He may feel a greater kinship with non-Christian members of the same caste than with the Christians outside his caste.[13] Both in the urban and in the rural Christian communities, caste distinction is shown at the social gatherings—marriage, funeral, and feasts.

Towards an Alternative

Before suggesting any alternative structure of society, one should pause a while and ask himself this pertinent question: Why does caste persist in spite of the pressures brought against it? Rajaiah D. Paul gives an answer to this question. He says,

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[11] *Memoir of the First Centenary of the Earliest Protestant Mission at Madras.* By W. Taylor. (Madras), 1847. Pp. 333, 362.

[12] *The Cross Over India.* By Rajaiah D. Paul. (SCM Press, Ltd., London), 1952. Pp. 103-05.

[13] *Under Three Flags.* By Stephen Neill. (Friendship Press, New York), 1954. P. 82.

"Christians in India, especially in the South, have not yet been convinced of the absurdity and evil of this horrid custom."[14] What he says cannot be totally true. For, as Stephen Neill puts it, every Christian is well aware of the fact that the Church transcends caste and includes members of many castes, to whom he cannot remain indifferent and whom he cannot treat as though he has nothing to do with them.[15] Yet he cleaves to caste. The reason is that though conscious of its evil, people are more conscious of its advantages. So the Church or nation which wants to develop social alternatives to caste should take into account not merely its sinfulness, but also its advantages.

Regarding the advantages of this unique feature of Indians' common life, Dandekar says, "It should be remembered that it is the institution of caste which has enabled the diverse elements of population in India to live together in a more or less organised form....From the point of view of the individual, the caste to which he belongs affords him social and economic security from the very beginning."[16] We should not forget the fact that caste has deep roots in the social fabric and, therefore, cannot be easily dislodged. To quote from the findings of a group of Christian village workers: "For several reasons, psychological, sociological and religious, the caste system has a toughness about it. Caste gives a certain moral, emotional and social security, because it provides recognition, welfare, sense of belonging and clear direction in matters of behaviour. More than these, the common use of the term 'demon of caste' points towards the truth that it is more than sociological in character, that it has spiritual roots. And it has the sanction of traditional religion."[17] Above all, caste has been serving as a principle of integration of society unifying the diverse ethnic and social groups in India.

Any alternative structure of society can succeed only if it meets these basic needs of man and society more adequately than caste.

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[14] *The Cross Over India*, p. 103.

[15] *Under Three Flags*, p. 83.

[16] *The Basic Beliefs of Hinduism.* (YMCA, Calcutta), 1955. Pp. 145-46.

[17] "Report of the Allahabad Consultation (1956)", *The Pattern of Rural Community Development*, p. 25.

CASTE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

By John Healey, *Tambaram**

1. Caste and Occupation in General

It has frequently been pointed out by the text-books that the rigid relationship between occupation and caste has hindered the free mobility of men from one occupation to another. This, it is stated, not only meant inflexibility of the economic system but has also meant the misdirection of and malallocation of human talents.

'Full many a flower is born to blush unseen'....merely because a man is born of a caste whose traditional occupation does not demand the natural talents with which he has been endowed.

There is undoubtedly a great deal of truth in all this and the country is only just realizing what human resources can be tapped under a more egalitarian system; but the argument must not be overstated. The relationship between caste and occupation although more rigid in the past than in the present, did allow a certain amount of latitude in the choice of occupation. Brahmins were traders, money-lenders and landlords in pre-British times and Mahars (untouchables) were able to enter military service. In the main the rigidity of the caste-occupation pattern has been greatest among the more skilled artisan castes. Among the less specialized castes and priestly castes there has been much greater mobility so that the agriculturalists and traders have been able to change their occupations more easily than carpenters, goldsmiths and potters.

If we define castes according to the criteria of endogamy and not according to occupation, then one particular caste is rarely co-extensive with one particular occupation. In fact,

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'My paper is based largely on "second-hand" information and not on direct observation. A bibliography is given at the end. A large part of the analysis is based on the work of Prof. Srinivas and a number of other sociologists who have contributed articles to the *Economic Weekly* over the last few years. It should be remembered throughout that there is an exception to almost any generalization that can be made about "caste".'—J. M. H.

there may be several castes within one occupational group. The modern sociological view is that the so-called "sub-castes" are not really *sub*-castes of larger castes, but the ultimate social units—based on endogamy and kinship. The larger groups commonly called "castes" are in fact clusters of sub-castes following a similar occupation (*e.g.,* Brahmin or *sonar* or *chamar*). The solidarity of the castes as opposed to the sub-castes is greater today because of the growth of voluntary societies and political pressure groups. But the greater solidarity, of course, accrues to the so-called "sub-caste" and it is to this that we shall refer in the main.

Today it is possible for a person to follow almost any occupation he chooses and still retain his caste membership. Excommunication from a caste is still largely a result of breaking certain rules of conduct, rather than changing occupation. A striking example of this in recent years is the case of a Brahmin who started a business for skinning dead cattle and making leather goods without losing caste. This is not to say, of course, that it is easy for any caste member to raise his economic position. Low caste people and Harijans usually lack the capital and the education necessary for them to rise.

On the other hand, there are impressive examples of low caste groups of greater vigour rising to positions of political dominance through the achievement of economic prosperity in recent years. The Nadars of Madras illustrate this. As Srinivas points out, "the economic forces unleashed by World War II, and political and social changes of the last ten years have vastly increased the power of the numerically large castes. They rarely come from the Brahmin or the Vaishya category....it is usual for them to come from the Shudra category". This is particularly true at the regional level.

People's desire to rise in status has an important influence on economic growth. The desire to imitate the habits and customs of those of higher social rank can be a strong spur to economic improvement. In the West, the desire of working and middle class families to "keep up with the Jones's", has stimulated thriftiness, hard work and economic ambition as a means of rising in the social scale. In India, similarly, it would seem that the desire to rise above one's caste (and to imitate the habits of the caste above) might stimulate the same desire for economic improvement. An observer of the social scene in a Mysore village writes, "The results of irrigation mean more or less a social and cultural revolution. The peasants of one village

altered their dress to some extent, their diet too,....relations became more contractual instead of based on status. This prosperity was followed by a general desire to imitate the way of life of the Brahmins. The villagers themselves say that 'refinement' came to them with irrigation." Here economic development and caste status are closely interconnected.

If we can be sure that the lower castes, in their striving for higher social rank, will follow habits of enterprise, thrift and industry to achieve it, all will be well for economic progress. If social aspiration leads villagers to build a brick-house where they previously built a mud one, or stimulates them to use the Japanese method of cultivation in preference to the traditional method—then economic progress would be greatly stimulated. But if the striving to imitate those higher in the social hierarchy means resort to largely unproductive and lavish social expenditure (*e.g.*, on ceremonies), then the benefits of economic ambition will be dissipated. As someone put it more than 25 years ago, "the Indian village will find itself groping in a vicious circle of wealth, social prestige and extravagance which will dissipate the hard-won acquisitions of decades". There will be little gain in economic standards of living if the aspiring lower castes attempt to improve their social status by incurring large-scale indebtedness instead of greater economic independence.

It was frequently said of old that the Indian social order was a despotism of caste tempered by matriculation. If educational attainment is to be the key to a rise in social status, this is all to the good. But if the lower groups follow the lead of the higher castes in generally spurning commerce and industry as vocations, then the conditions for economic growth are less favourable.

The Kalelkar Commission points out that caste may serve *communities* as a ladder for rising in the social scale but never the individual. There is no doubt that members of a sub-caste help each other in their business ventures and striving and this mutual help can be a valuable contribution to the growth of economy. On the other hand, it puts a premium on conformity and caste solidarity to the detriment of individual initiative and deviant behaviour.

If caste has not been an unsurmountable barrier to economic progress and occupational mobility, it has been, to some extent, a solvent of caste divisions. The growth of factories and

places of employment where all can mix, the growth of mechanization and cosmopolitan urban centres and the development of railways, roads and communications have all helped to increase intermixing and to break down caste prejudice.

Is caste, then, no longer a factor of significance to the economic growth of the country ? Before we jump to that conclusion, it is necessary to consider some other facets of the problem.

Economic development has in some ways also increased the solidarity and resilience of caste and some would go so far as to say that it is a more powerful force today than it was in the pre-British days. The development of communications, together with the growth of publication, has widened the range as well as the all-India solidarity of caste through the growth of caste newspapers, journals and conferences. Even the motor car drivers now form a sub-caste ! Moreover, wherever a particular caste or group of castes have become dominant through their economic prosperity or political power, other castes will be frustrated ; wherever a particular sub-caste or community controls positions of leadership in industry, commerce, finance or on the land, there will be a strong bias in management, appointments and policy in favour of those groups. Unity is disrupted and efficiency impaired.

In order to analyse these aspects of caste more fully it is necessary to deal with the caste-occupation relationship and the caste-economic development connection under three heads :

(*a*) Caste and urban industrial business ;

(*b*) Caste and the rural economy ; and

(*c*) Caste and the political factor in economic development.

Caste and the Urban Business Class

There has been a strong tendency in India for certain castes and communities to be associated with industry, finance and trade. The trading or Bania castes of North India, for example, have always been largely associated with business. There have always been exceptions, of course. The Parsees were the most important pioneers of industry at the beginning of the century, although they are now replaced by the Marwarees who rose to industrial and financial dominance in the last 30 years. The term Marwaree is, of course, a regional one but it covers mainly the Jain and Hindu Bania castes from which there have been

many industrialists and traders who have migrated to many parts of India and stimulated economic and industrial growth. The relationship between caste and industry has not been rigid however as a study of the caste background of industrial owners and managers will show.

Using Census material for 1911, it is possible to analyse industrial management and ownership of privately owned units according to caste for the main cities of India. This only gives a partial view but is of some interest. In Calcutta, the traditional trading castes were not well represented but Brahmins and Kyasths were prominent as industrialists. In Madras, similarly Brahmin and Vaishya castes were numerically important while in Bombay a considerable number of Bhatias and other non-trading castes had taken to industrial enterprise. The Parsees were, of course, the most important single industrial group at the beginning of the century, and they were outside the caste system—coming as they did, from an originally artisan background in the 18th century.

For recent years it is not so easy to obtain the necessary statistical data and the situation is more complex. But there has undoubtedly been a movement into business by many different castes. Brahmins have taken increasing part in such a trend. Thus in Maharashtra as well as Madras, Brahmins have gone into business occupations. In Nasik, for example, they run grocery shops, hotels, shoe shops and cloth shops as well as being shroffs, bankers and jewellers. Not all business, however, has the same or equal reputation. A Nagar Brahmin, for example, would willingly join a large industrial firm of high reputation but he would be more reluctant to establish a fruit shop. It is only certain types of business occupation which command the approval and respect of caste members. What these types are and how they will change, will greatly affect the future economic growth of the country.

Despite the composite caste picture of business which we have suggested, it is undoubtedly true that certain caste groups are dominant in industrial and trading enterprise in India. The trading castes of Gujerat, and, more particularly the Marwarees, still continue to supply industry, trade and finance with men, largely because of their resources, their acquaintance with business techniques and their experience. These groups have been able to concentrate a considerable amount of economic power in their hands because of the managing agency system and the system of financial interlocking that goes with it in

India. These caste groups have always been highly urbanized and have never undertaken directly agricultural and handicraft activity, their contact with agriculture has been largely confined to money-lending and trading. For this reason, the industrial development which they have stimulated has been largely confined to a few large towns and has not led to much integration between urban and rural centres of production. In fact, these groups with their strong urban prejudices have, in many ways, impeded the development of rural agriculture and craft output.

Moreover, caste and sub-caste have played an important part in the growth of industry and finance in India—more particularly, in determining the pattern of behaviour, attitude and association between different entrepreneural groups. It can be said with truth that the bulk of the positions of advantage and administrative responsibility, especially positions of profit and power in Indian business, are held by persons belonging to the caste or sub-caste of the owners or managing agents of the enterprises concerned. As M. M. Mehta points out in his study of industrial concentration, industrial and financial power is concentrated in a few hands in the private sector and "a few leading families control and guide the industrial destinies of the country. Fresh and young blood seldom finds opportunity to enter the closely preserved and well organised industrial oligarchy". In this way positions of leadership and managerial importance are held by those related to the owners or managing agents by caste, kin or community regardless of ability or aptitude. Able and efficient men outside these particular caste groups find it impossible to enter positions of vital economic importance to the community, and are diverted to alternative occupations. It is only in the case of the more reputable managing agents that selection for appointment is based on objective criteria rather than caste association, and these are few in number. Inefficiency, mediocrity and often gross mismanagement and misappropriation often result; power is given into the hands of men not always capable of using it properly and much talent is wasted. Recent enquiries have given unhappy glimpses of this situation, although not all responsibility can be placed on caste prejudice.

It is to be hoped that public enterprise will continue to pick its staff on the basis of merit and suitability in order to avoid the wastes which the national economy can hardly afford at this stage. Although business knowledge and experience may be passed on within particular caste and kin groups, the in-

herent qualities of leadership and personal management are unlikely to be the monopoly of a few castes. The nation must tap its human resources to the full.

Rural Economy

The key to India's economic development undoubtedly lies with the rural economy and the system of small-scale agriculture and industry. But it is just in this sector that caste forces have remained strongest and most resistant to change. Factories are still uncommon in rural areas and the village has been less subject to those caste-disintegrating forces which work so powerfully in the urban and industrial sector.

In some respects, of course, caste has not been such an obstacle to economic efficiency as is sometimes supposed. Although in rural areas caste interdependence and occupational monopoly has remained among the artisan castes, there has been greater mobility in agriculture. The traditional caste relationships have continued so that a man does not easily change his barber, carpenter or potter, while caste trade secrets have been closely preserved. But this has not impeded innovation and efficiency, for if an artisan continues to be inefficient in his services and the employer continues to be slack in his payment for these services, the situation will not be tolerated. The caste monopoly is not so rigid that it will encompass gross inefficiency and traditional caste relationships will break down under these conditions. Since most ideas and new techniques for improvements in production come from outside the caste system,—*i.e.*, from the Government community block schemes and scientific institutions—there is no special reason why caste should be a barrier to improved methods of cultivation and craftsmanship.

In some communities the impact of the cash economy has broken down the traditional pattern of caste-occupation interrelations. In the Nilgiris, in recent years, for example, the non-Kotas can obtain their tools from the bazaar for money instead of getting them from the traditional tool-making Kota groups. The Kotas have therefore had to concentrate on agriculture and have taken to growing cash crops. The result of this has been for a man to be able to stand on his own economically but at the same time there has been a greater hostility between the different groups. Individualism and scope for economic independence and expansion have been bought at the price of insecurity of market and increased social friction.

There are, however, strong caste prejudices impeding the easy and uniform development of agriculture and ancillary activities. This is best explained in terms of the concept of the dominant caste. In all villages or localities, there is usually some caste which, by virtue of its possession of land or capital, is able to exert a preponderant influence in that area. In most villages there is a close connection between caste and land-holding. In Old Tambaram, for instance, the Reddiars own most of the land while in North Kerala, the Nambudris are the main land-owners with the higher groups of Nayars as the non-cultivating tenants or owners. In most areas of the country the out-caste groups are landless labourers.

It is this inequality of wealth and economic power with its caste undertones, which has been the greatest obstacle to the co-operative movement in India for the last 50 years. The positions of influence, the capital and access to urban sources of financial aid are in the hands of the dominant castes. These groups are determined to prevent the lower caste peasants from benefiting from this movement and official aid. The small peasant and artisan whose methods so badly need improving, and whose capital needs augmenting, is unable to make very much progress when cut off by the domination of the strong. The managing committees of the existing co-operatives treat these societies as the close preserve of one caste or group and even the officials from outside line up with the dominant group. The Rural Credit Survey writes : "The local landlord who may also be the money-lender and the local money-lender who may also be the trader and educated person who may also be the subordinate official—all these through their association with the outside world of urban finance and power wield an influence in the village which at points is diverted from the good of the village to the benefit of the caste or even a close circle of relatives."

This concentration of economic power at the village level, along caste lines very often, is merely a question of the domination of the strong over the weak preventing the development of peasant agriculture and aggravating the already existing economic and social inequalities.

Political Aspects

When voting is on a caste basis and when cabinets are constituted on a caste-wise basis (as the first popular cabinet in

Mysore and in other regions) there is a danger that voters will, and do, expect their elected ministers to help or serve their own caste interests rather than that of the community or region as a whole. The minister will be sorely tempted to meet these sectional demands in order to maintain his popularity and power. Policies are likely to be distorted and not in the overall interests of economic development.

Caste feeling reduces the unity of the country in the same way as excessive regionalism, and in this way forms a severe handicap to the effective implementation of economic plans. Wherever there is rivalry and jealousy in social relations, the necessary basis of co-operation does not exist for rapid economic progress.

Conclusion

Many people look to economic forces to bring about the disintegration of caste and already there is some evidence for this hope. Industrialization and expanded employment opportunities will decrease caste tensions that arise from rivalry for jobs. Money spent on a factory will do more to break down caste feeling than the equivalent spent on anti-caste propaganda (as Srinivas points out). Mechanization will make the handling of dirty material less necessary and the growth of cosmopolitan centres where intermingling is unavoidable, will moderate the strength of caste feeling even if it will not eradicate it.

But economic development cannot be the complete solvent of caste prejudice. As we have seen earlier it sometimes aggravates it. Caste has probably shown more resistance to economic changes than any other Indian social institution. There seems little evidence, for example, that inter-caste marriages have taken place to serve the commercial or business interests of the parents or families concerned. The problem of caste is essentially a moral one. One might say a religious problem. And moral and religious problems do not have economic answers or solutions. The moral foundations of society must be strong if the economic superstructure is to be substantial. There is just enough truth in the Old Testament doctrine that only the righteous ultimately prosper. The present-day situation in Indian villages is unpleasantly reminiscent of the situation that Amos described, so strikingly. The only answer to this situation of oppression and injustice is the answer given by Amos himself.

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CASTE IN INDIA—A PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH

By S. P. Adinarayan, *Annamalainagar**

Introduction

The caste system as it exists in India is an institution of such highly complex origin that in the opinion of many expert students of the subject (*e.g.*, J. H. Hutton, *Caste in India*) it is unique. Certain aspects of this system may be found in other countries like Japan and the U.S.A. but not the phenomenon in its entirety. Is this uniqueness something to boast of or regret ? There is a subtle human tendency to preserve that which is unique irrespective of its intrinsic worth. Perhaps this is one of the factors that has contributed in creating in the minds of many Indians today an ambivalent attitude towards the caste system. This ambivalency is but part of a general conflict in the mind of modern India which is incidental to its national resurgence. This conflict has taken the form of loyalty to the past *versus* desire for progress. As regards the caste system, this conflict is something sought to be resolved by the solution—hold fast to that which is good in it and get rid of that which is bad. The only virtue of such a solution is its simplicity. Complex social phenomena do not often lend themselves to clear-cut dichotomous divisions on ethical lines. Sometimes virtue and vice are found so intertwined that you cannot uproot the one without weeding out the other. It is admitted that the caste system contains both these elements (though it is not within the scope of this paper to discuss this matter in detail). Our main concern is the question—is the good, good enough or is the bad capable of reform. Is this a matter where compromise is called for or do we need a radical solution ?

Some generally admitted adverse effects of the caste system on society is fatalism, a sense of frustration and compartmentalism. Caste creates (so does class) *social distance* which has been defined as the feeling that our group is set off against

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* A paper circulated for preparatory reading by the participants of the Madura Consultation on *Caste and Its Alternatives*. Dr. S. P. Adinarayan is Professor of Philosophy, Annamalai University, Annamalainagar, Madras State.

another group. This implies both subordination and super-ordination. It creates a favourable attitude towards certain people and a feeling of suspicion towards others irrespective of their personal worth. A person is born in a certain caste, he cannot either go up or go down, so what is the use of trying? Often instead of making the most of life he seeks to make the best of a bad bargain.

Ameliorative measures introduced by the Government like communal representation, reservation of seats, special financial aid, though undoubtedly of some value have also had some adverse effect so much so that today there is a definite tendency to progressively restrict their operation. People who had kept their caste a secret are now trotting it out. This would be a good thing if they were to glory in it all the year round and not in certain times only for the sake of seats in colleges or jobs. The purpose of these measures was to upgrade the lower classes, instead they sometimes seem to have down-graded the higher ones. Instead of the Harijan becoming a Brahmin, the Brahmin is becoming a Harijan. It is undoubtedly true that certain people will not be holding the high positions that they do in society today but for their caste; conversely, others have been deprived of their legitimate places also because of it. It is indeed a paradox that some of the measures introduced to fight caste have resulted in strengthening its undesirable features in a new context. Today there is a growing realization that the best way to fight it is to strengthen the catholic and constructive forces in society.

Intermarriage *vs.* Inter-Dining

There has been a good deal of discussion in India today as to the relative value of these two modes of conduct as symptoms of catholicity and rising above narrow caste prejudices. Some have emphasised intermarriage as the criterion of a lack of caste-consciousness. To our mind, inter-dining seems to be much more important than intermarriage. By talking of marriage we bring in the sex element which is highly surcharged with emotion and cankered with complexes. Often the marriage issue is a red-herring drawn across the path of progress in inter-group or inter-caste relationships. "Would you like to see your daughter in the arms of a Negro?"—this question to which nobody ever pauses for a reply has been found a very effective way of sabotaging favourable progress in White-Negro relationships in the U.S.A. Psychological in-

vestigations have shown that on the whole the Negro is not too keen on marrying White women nor is the Negro-White marriage a live issue with him. He is more concerned with winning equal rights and privileges. On the other hand, white Americans seem to be obsessed with the marriage question. Marriage is a highly personal matter. Like will always seek like. By marrying into your own caste you are guaranteed certain amount of community of interest and sameness of outlook. Initial adjustments become easier if both husband and wife have roughly the same kind of attitudes to things in general. A man feels safe by marrying into his own caste and usually does so unless there are powerful motives (*e.g.*, love or money) to override considerations of safety. Nobody can be blamed for wanting to marry into his own caste nor can such a desire be construed, as a sign of narrow-mindedness. Edwin R. Embree, the American writer, has well summed up the truth about intermarriage thus : "There are so many problems to consider in entering into so intimate a partnership as marriage that I am always shocked by the bland stupidity of people who keep putting the question, 'Would you want your daughter to marry a Negro ?' They might as well ask, 'Would you want your daughter to marry Englishmen or Yale Graduates or men with big feet ?' There are very few men that I will be willing to have my daughter marry. Certainly I do not expect her to marry men by whole categories. I hope she will take into consideration the many factors needed to make a successful marriage not only love and respect but similarity of educational background and interests and all the small but important things which must go into a permanent partnership."

But inter-dining is a different cup of tea altogether. In fact, many caste prejudices can be overcome over a cup of tea. Here no permanent relationships are involved, no questions of adjustment or ethnocentrism. The participants in a meal come into a purely temporary relationship. This participation does not involve any deep-seated personal adjustments. Hence he who refuses to inter-dine is more strongly imbued with caste prejudices than he who refuses to intermarry.

Caste in the Christian Church

The Christian community in India is supposed to be in principle homogeneous yet the different caste groups in it keep themselves aloof to such an extent that it has become a mat-

ter of some concern to the leaders of the community. The Indian Church is an interesting sociological unit. It has drawn converts from all castes and from among the Muslims. Man cannot change his nature in the twinkling of an eye. It is a psychological absurdity to expect a convert to give up all his pet prejudices just because he has been converted. Converts of the same caste will naturally tend to form a sub-group within the Church. It is too much to expect the orthodox Brahmin convert to start immediately to inter-dine or to inter-marry (if he happens to be a bachelor). But if he refuses to inter-dine, say, after a year of Christian fellowship, then there must be something wrong either with our fellowship or his Christianity. The more objectionable aspects of caste, *e.g.*, separate seats for Harijans and refusing to kneel at the Communion table with low caste converts are happily almost a thing of the past and where they still exist must be fought tooth and nail. But alas ! what can we do when caste feelings are fully exploited in Church politics (horrible phrase) and when elections to Church councils take place on caste lines. We can only raise up our hands in horror (and hope to hit a caste convert on the head while trying to do so). Compared to this he who insists on purity of caste within the Church seems to be only a mild sinner.

It has been said that the early missionaries deliberately encouraged caste within the Church. I lack both historical or statistical data to discuss this question in full. It was a missionary Professor of History in a leading South Indian college that first made this statement to me. This tendency, though unfortunate, is understandable. The earlier converts were predominantly from the lower castes so that when a Brahmin convert was made, naturally much publicity was given to the fact. While Hindus accused the missionary of westernizing his converts, it is possible that the missionary in his anxiety to see that the Brahmin convert does not back-slide, made social conditions within the Church as congenial to him as possible. As part of this he may have condoned and even encouraged his caste scruples. Though the early Christians did much to upgrade Harijan status, yet caste was so much in the air, was so much part of the Indian way of life that it was inevitable that they should be influenced in their thought by it to some extent. Even if they did not deliberately encourage it, there is some evidence to show that the early missionaries recognised caste as a social institution and made no attempts to fight it within the Church.

A Recent Attempt to Gauge the Strength of Caste Feeling in India

Dr. B. Kuppuswamy of the University of Mysore, attempted to measure the caste attitudes of college students by means of certain questionnaires and tests. His subjects were 591 students from South Indian colleges. Eleven per cent of them felt that the caste system was satisfactory, 32 per cent as tolerable and 56 per cent as intolerable. Men were less satisfied with the system than women. Brahmins as a whole showed greater approval than non-Brahmins. Men students living in hostels were more intolerant of caste than those staying with their parents. But the opposite was the case with women students. Villagers were more intolerant of it than those brought up in towns, and those brought up in towns more intolerant than those brought up in cities. This is indeed a surprising result cutting contrary to the popular belief about urban life engendering broad-mindedness. Dr. Kuppuswamy observes, "With increase in income, there is an increase in the feeling that the caste system is intolerable. Life in the joint-family seems to have made for intolerance of the caste system." Twenty-five per cent of the subjects approved of marriages only within the sub-caste and 40 per cent of marriages without any restriction. Women were more conservative than men. There was widespread antipathy to Harijans both in the matter of marriage as well as in letting out houses. Seventy-five per cent were opposed to taking caste and religious considerations into account when making admissions to colleges and over 90 per cent approved of giving special educational privileges to depressed classes.[1]

Caste and the Muslim Community

We have already noted that early missionaries did not altogether escape the spell of caste. We may now note that there seems to be some evidence to believe that it influenced even the Muslim community which in theory staunchly believes in the principle of Universal Brotherhood. In the Uttar Pradesh until recently it was a common practice in railway stations and examination halls to have Hindu water and Muslim water. As a measure of self-defence the Muslim refused to drink water from the Hindu and thus took over one aspect of the caste system.

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[1] *The Journal of Psychology*, 1956, Vol. 42, pp. 169-206.

Some years ago (earlier to Dr. Kuppuswamy) I made an attempt to investigate the difference in the attitude to Harijans between Hindus and Muslims. I used the Bogardus Social Distance Test which gives a numerical index for measuring prejudice—a *plus* score indicating lack of prejudice and a *minus* score indicating the opposite. My subjects were 220 Hindu students, 70 Muslim students, 120 Hindu professionals and 35 Muslim professionals. Here are the results :

Hindu students, + 19·2 ; Muslim students, + 1·2 ; Hindu professionals, + 21·3 ; and Muslim professionals, + 9·9.

My findings seem to be directly opposed to the popular belief that Muslims have fewer caste prejudices. As far as students are concerned, Hindus score 18 points more than Muslims. A similar high difference is found in favour of Hindus in the professional category also. Of late much thought has been given to the fate of the Harijan and perhaps the Hindu is making a conscious effort to be friendly towards him whereas the Muslim may be taking his catholicity for granted and hence putting it into operation ineffectively.[2]

The Problem of Transfer

A pathetic belief in the power of transfer vitiates much attempt at social reform in India today. By abolishing communal hostels, we are not abolishing communal problems. I have seen in the North, Hindu and Muslim students living in the greatest fellowship in the same hostel yet fall into two distinct camps when rioting broke out. Soldiers can behave in the most indisciplined way when not in uniform and sportsmen most unsportingly outside the playing field. The meeting of A and B is just a meeting of A and B. To invest it with profound possibilities is to court certain disappointment.

Psychologists have no longer such implicit faith in the principle of transfer as our forefathers had. Even thirty years ago, students were made to read classics in the hope that the powers of concentration that were necessary for its mastery could be transferred to other spheres of life. Transfer can occur only between two activities which have some elements in common.

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[2] "Before and After Independence—A Study of Racial and Communal Attitudes in India," *The British Journal of Psychology*, 1953, Vol. 44.

It is not enough for a Harijan and a Brahmin to meet, they must learn to meet and to be friendly under circumstances that usually provoke hostility. Yet there is also some evidence to show that large-scale intimate friendships between individuals of two communities lessen tension and increase understanding between them.

THE SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF THE ANDHRA CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

By G. L. Benny, *Guntur**

I. The Background

The Andhra Christian community, about two-and-a-half million in number, consists of the Roman Catholics and the Protestants of various denominations. They are drawn from all communities but the bulk of them are converts from the Scheduled Castes, *i.e.*, the Mala and the Madiga communities labelled as the untouchables. All of them suffered alike and are still suffering from the same economic, political and social disabilities. Their occupations once have been weaving in the case of Malas and leather tanning in the case of Madigas. In the wake of the introduction of improved techniques, these occupations have paled into insignificance and all of them are now making their living as agricultural labourers under the landlords of the village.

To have an idea of the typical Christian community, one should go to a village and see for himself the topography of the village. The caste groups live in a contiguous area with the outcaste groups thrown at a 'respectable' distance from them and with each outcaste group placed at 'strategic' distance from the other. Such an arrangement has indirectly helped the caste groups to play one outcaste group against the other. As a consequence, the outcaste groups could not think of their common problems and evolve a common programme of action for their emancipation. In no other country, perhaps, have the underprivileged been so kept in darkness for ages and again in no other country have such a people remained physically weak, intellectually deficient and morally coward for centuries. If there was any consolation at all, it consisted in their feeling that in the remote past, untouchability had taken worse forms like unapproachability, unseeability and even unspeakability and that these forms no longer existed. India would have been a

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* A paper read at the Guntur Consultation on the Social, Political and Economic Trends in the Andhra Christian Community, rewritten by the author for inclusion in the *Bulletin*. Mr. G. L. Benny, M.A., is Head of the Department of Philosophy, Andhra Christian College, Guntur.

different country had there been an inkling of what reconciliation meant between the ruling class and the underprivileged class as between the Patricians and Plebians of Rome. But a reconciliation presupposes conflict and a conflict, courage on the part of the underprivileged to resist the aggressor and claim equality. There was nothing in the religion of the country or the custom to provide such an incentive for conscious deliberation and concerted action.

The Era of Missions.—It is into such a background that in about the middle of the 19th century, the Christian Missions threw themselves to help restore to these underprivileged people their humanity. Through the establishment of a network of schools in villages and hospitals in urban centres and through the preaching of the Gospel, they catered to the needs of their body, mind and soul. The embracement of Christian faith by the masses belonging to the untouchable classes gave them a new way of life which produced self-confidence, self-respect and self-reliance in the individual who for centuries had been groaning under the yoke of *Karma* and *Maya*. The programmes initiated by the Missions for social regeneration helped the people to develop a dislike for such social evils as bigamy, idolatry and drink. There was widespread improvement in social hygiene.

There has been severe criticism about mass conversions alleging that the illiterate masses have been induced to conversion. While it cannot be denied that mass conversion as any other mass movement implied mixed motives, it can be asserted that the Gospel has helped the masses to move out of darkness into light. It is true that the average caste Hindu and even some among the intelligentsia found it difficult to understand the mind of the untouchable who was born into this new faith and the joy which he found in the new life. It is no wonder that to such people, the phenomenon of conversion seemed 'foolishness' on the part of the untouchables and a 'stumbling block' in the path of national unity. To them the untouchable had an answer in the reply of the blind man whose eyes were opened by Jesus. When men around him were indulging in a theoretical discussion whether his blindness was due to his sin or that of his parents, he replied : "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see."

Special mention must be made of the excellent work done by the Salvation Army among the criminal tribes, namely, the Yerukulas and by the Lutheran Church among the hill tribes,

viz., the Koyas. Yerukulas, whose ancestral calling was thievery, were made to dwell in settlements and through preaching and teaching have been reclaimed to decent human living. The hill tribes who were animists have found in the person of Jesus, the God, Who is the Father of all.

The Missions have done yeoman service in the cause of depressed humanity. The Gospel focussed attention on the day-to-day problems of these people and it brought society and its traditional practices under the verdict of conscience. The words of J. H. Oldham with reference to the Church and its function in society have a special bearing on the Indian situation in general and that of the Andhra Christian community in particular : "It is impossible to hold that it is not the task of the Christian faith sincerely held and acted on, to have a far-reaching transforming and in some directions a disturbing influence on the whole of the social and political life. If it were otherwise, it would hardly deserve men's attention." The Gospel has worked as leaven in the lump and as new wine in the old bottles. The enlightened Hindu conscience woke up and found that the problems of the neglected section of the society had to be solved if the country were to progress. Movements for the uplift of Harijans and for various other social reforms are the result. When the bias associated with national pride is on the decline, men will have a judicious mind to give due place to the impact of the Gospel on the Indian society.

The Era of the Church.—With the dawn of Independence in 1947, the Christian Churches have felt a compelling need to take stock of their significant gains and miserable failures. With the Gospel which has transformed the life of the community, we have also inherited certain problems, foreign and indigenous. One such problem is the division of the Church into various denominations. The denominations are a Western import into India brought in by the Christian Missions. This has a bearing on the social situation since it adds to and reinforces the divisions of Indian society. The faith of the typical Christian in Andhra is centred round the person of Jesus Christ and does not fortunately go deep enough into the denominational core. He is much less interested in the theological battles based on doctrinal issues. It is encouraging to see that the matter of Church unity, an essential requisite to witness Christ in a land of many religions, is engaging the minds of the Christian theologians and other Church leaders. There is an absolute need to expedite the process of Church unity.

II. Caste and Casteism in Society and Church

Caste is a problem which has crept into the Church standing as a bar to effective Christian witness. Caste is a hierarchical institution involving thousands of castes and sub-castes graded in the order of being superior and inferior. No matter where the cancer of caste had its first start, it has now become malignant and poisons the organism of Indian society. In regard to caste, it is true to say, "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God."

History shows that from time to time attempts made to eradicate caste differences were foiled and undermined. The religious movements of Jainism, Buddhism, Saivism, Vaishnavism and Sikhism, not to speak of the movements connected with Neo-Hinduism have all of them, in some measure or other, recognised caste as an evil. Of all the movements to reform caste, the most powerful one was that of Buddhism. In due course, Buddhism too ultimately lost its savour by allowing itself to be absorbed back into Hinduism. Buddhism almost disappeared from the land of its birth, while other faiths have relapsed into the pattern of caste.

The Veera cult of Palnad in Andhra Pradesh shows that so far back as 1080 A.D., there was a socio-religious movement which did not accept the distinctions of caste. "The heroes themselves are of different castes. Anapoth (a Brahmin), Velamala Dorneedu (Velama), Tsakala Tsandu (Dhobi), Mangala Mallu (Barber), Kammara Patti (Blacksmith), Kummara Patti (Potter), Camsali Tsandu (Goldsmith) and Mala Kannama Needu (Mala) are the heroes who are raised to divinity and worshipped at the annual festival at Karempudi which falls roughly in the month of November. Till today the people of all castes go there to worship and participate in Tsapakudu (participating of the same meal on a footing of equality). It is unfortunate that the Veera cult in due course has yielded to Vedic influences. After the festivities are over, followers of the Veera cult revert to their old religious ways."[1]

All these show that: (1) caste was condemned by all reformist movements, (2) that any reform was tolerated to the extent that it did not violently interfere with caste, (3) that the movement for reform was doomed to die, the moment it

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[1] An extract from *Palnati Veera Charithra*, edited by Pandit Umakantha Vaidya Sekhar.

attempted to strike at the root of caste, and (4) that caste does not seem to be a problem which can be fought against in isolation from other problems of Indian society, political, economic and religious.

The Foreign Missionary who came to India to preach the Gospel has all along tried to rouse men's conscience to the evil of caste. He did not launch a direct attack against caste partly because of his knowledge of the historical background of the institution of caste, partly because of his desire to spread the Gospel with the least possible offence to the Indian and partly because of his commitment to the Government that he would not involve himself in doing anything that would disturb the established order and create unrest; and there is nothing which would touch the sentiment of an Indian in the way caste does. Thus, caste differences persisted in the framework of the Church. While there exists no bar to inter-dining between converts and non-converts of the same caste, inter-dining between converts belonging to different caste groups seem impossible at the village level and infrequent at the urban level. Intermarriages are a rare phenomenon. In fact, there exist separate places of worship for different caste groups belonging to the same denomination and dwelling in the same village. The gulf between profession and practice in the life of the Church is nowhere so evident as in the failure of the Christians to worship together. If the eradication of caste has been an omission in the programme of the Foreign Missions, it is nevertheless an opportunity posing a challenge to the programme of the Church.

Efforts to Meet the Problems of Caste and Untouchability: (1) *Poet G. Joshua.*—Mention must be made of the significant contribution made by the contemporary poet Gurram Joshua of Vinukonda, Guntur District, whose poetical works on the twin evils of caste and untouchability have swayed the emotions and touched the hearts of even the die-hard caste-Hindus who could not savour the indelicate but rational approach of the leader of the untouchables, the late Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. Untouchability is the master-thought reflected in all his works, of which *Gabbilamu* is a direct exposition of the theme. He has also not spared the Church for its compromise with the evil.

(2) *Steps Taken by the Government.*—The following steps taken by the Government to eradicate the evils of untouchability and caste have an indirect bearing on the Christian

community of Andhra : (*i*) Temple Entry, (*ii*) Celebration of Harijan Day each month, (*iii*) Inter-communal dinners, (*iv*) Recognition of untouchability as an offence punishable by law, (*v*) Offer of free legal aid to the aggrieved Harijan, and (*vi*) Offer of house sites on loan and subsidy basis to such of the members of backward and forward communities who are willing to dwell among the untouchables in the colonies which are being planned for the untouchables. Much as we commend the Government for taking these steps we also feel that these steps are too small to meet the magnitude of the problem.

(3) *Has the Church a Programme to Eradicate the Evils of Caste ?*—The Churches in India, though not indifferent to the problem of caste, do not seem to be making a conscious effort to tackle it. At present the problem of poverty is given more urgent attention but the problem of poverty is too vast ; the Churches can only help the Government in its steps to better the economic position of the underprivileged. So far, little has been done to help the Christians who are largely agricultural labourers ; and the Andhra Christian community feels frustrated. No doubt, poverty and social disabilities go together. Nevertheless, the Church has to make sincere efforts to fight the evil of caste and the spirit of casteism which is quite inconsistent with the spirit of Christianity. Christian faith with its emphasis upon the brotherhood of all men in Jesus Christ provides a spiritual foundation to challenge traditional inequalities in religion and society. Hinduism, in the words of Stanley Jones, has every 'capacity to assimilate and none to eliminate' : what is required today is the capacity to eliminate.

The Church can take the following steps which are helpful to the solution of the problem of caste : (*i*) Create an elite from each community in the village through whom the ideal of equality and oneness in Christ can spread, (*ii*) Arrange for corporate worship for Christians of different caste groups in the same place of worship, on occasions to start with, (*iii*) Attempt youth work by mixing groups at the village level and the parish level, (*iv*) Participate increasingly in the programmes of the wider community of the village life such as Youth Festivals, the celebration of Independence Day, Gandhi Jayanthi and the birthday of Nehru, etc., and (*v*) Believe that its amelioration can be secured only by its identification with the wider community and not by its keeping aloof. The social action of the Christian community must arise from this conviction.

(4) *The School.*—As we look at the set-up of the elementary schools existing in the villages, we come to understand that each of them caters to the educational needs of children drawn largely from one particular section of society or other. While children of all castes are welcome to any school, in practice the children of caste groups go to one school and the children of the outcaste groups go to a different school. The children as they live and grow, come to feel amongst themselves that community strictly means caste and not the wider village community. At the unconscious level of the mind, they come to nurture feelings of superiority and inferiority ; and they consider themselves as belonging to superior or inferior castes. If real democracy is to succeed in India, it is necessary to integrate the separate schools in the villages into one. Attractive and desirable as the ideal seems, it poses the following questions : (*i*) Whether the children of the untouchable communities will be treated with respect and not with contempt, (*ii*) Whether the village community has developed powerful means to allay the fears of the children of the untouchable classes, (*iii*) Whether the integration of schools would result in the retrenchment of teachers, and, if retrenched, has the Government an alternative to provide work for them, (*iv*) Whether the Church has developed Sunday School in the village to provide for religious instruction outside the school, and (*v*) Whether the teachers themselves have been sufficiently trained to rise above caste loyalties and promote fellowship on a footing of equality. The schools as they exist and function now had served their purpose. In the new context of national life they tend to impede the pace of democracy. If schools are integrated, the children of untouchable classes, no doubt, may experience humiliation on occasions. But it is a step in the right direction. One hardly knows swimming unless he gets into the water.

III. Christians of Harijan Origin

Are the Christians of Scheduled Caste origin socially and economically better placed than the Scheduled Castes ? In reply to this question, most non-Christians and some urban Christians who have no knowledge of the rural Christian community would say 'yes'. Their reply is based on a mistaken identification of 95 per cent of the Christians who live in villages with the 5 per cent of the educated white-collared Christians who are socially advanced and economically better placed. The rural Christian community also feels that they are economically better when they see the few educated Christians who go back to

the village on a visit. This is an illusion which endures in the minds of many. Even the State Government seems to have been carried away by it.

It is true that in the initial stages of the expansion of the Church, converts to Christianity have had better habits of social hygiene and correct social attitudes than the other members of the Scheduled Castes. But in the last two decades, social intercourse has been so frequent and social education so widespread that the difference between Harijan Christians and Harijan Hindus is hardly perceptible. The Government has framed policies by which the Christians are discriminated against on the presumption that they are economically better. A third generation Christian is not eligible for the educational concessions available to the second or first generation Christian. Many of the opportunities available to the children of the Scheduled Castes are not available to Christian children. As a result, large number of Christian children suffer real handicap. The Christian is not jealous of the opportunities offered to his Scheduled Caste brother ; he is happy and wants that they be increased more and more. But should the Christian go with a frustrated feeling that justice is denied to him because he has embraced the Christian religion. Should not a Government wedded to the ideal of a secular State remove such religious discrimination in its approach to the problem of securing social and economic justice ?

The political problems of the Andhra Christian community should not be overlooked but should be recognised, for without political opportunities social disabilities cannot be righted. When the Constitution was on the anvil, the leaders of the South Indian Christian community met in a Political Conference in December 1948. The Conference was opened by Bishop Louis Mathias and attended by prominent men like M. Ratnasami and Dr. P. V. Cherian. When a resolution expressing the support of the community for the abolition of the separate electorate was moved, it was with great difficulty that the leaders of the Andhra Christian community reconciled themselves to it. The difficulty they experienced in relation to this new move was not due to a lack of patriotism on their part, but due to their awareness of the peculiar social situation of the Christian community in Andhra.

Conclusion.—Among the countries of the East which have become free in the last decade, India is fortunate in having a democratic Constitution, a stable Government and a sound

leadership in the person of Pandit Nehru. The country is making headway, through the implementation of the plans of development and welfare. Casteism, linguism and provincialism do infect the life of society. At the same time, it is encouraging to see that the problems are being tackled in a way which contributes to progress. The country is in a state of transition. In India we are discovering the true meaning of society. Dr. P. D. Devanandan, Director of the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, speaking of 'the India we live in', states, "One significant outcome of the understanding of the society is the new meaning content we are learning to put into the word 'community'. Two generations ago it was associated with communalism, the community consciousness of narrow religious groups and bigotted caste denominations. Today we use terms like 'neighbourhood communities', 'community projects', 'world community', and the 'community of mankind' : all of which assume a new conception of human values and of human relations."

When India is emerging as a nation pledged to the ideals of equality, social, political and economic, it should not forget the lessons of history. History shows that a country is backward because of the backward sections of its people. If attempts to remove the backwardness are not made, to that extent, the progress of the country suffers. In the ultimate analysis, the freedom of a people is to be judged by the freedom enjoyed by those who are on the lowest rung of the social ladder. The words of Mathew Arnold may very well be adapted to a description of the Indian scene—"wandering between two worlds, one dead and the other powerless to be born". The transitional period is going to be one of anxiety for the minorities. It requires liberality on the part of the majority groups and courage on the part of the minority groups. Abiding in its faith, the Christian community has to act on the basis that it forms part of the stream of national life.

TOWARD THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ALTERNATIVE SOCIAL STRUCTURE

(Some Sociological and Theological Insights)

By Richard W. Taylor, *Dehra Dun**

Political democracy, industrialisation, socialism and *sarvodaya*—all these imply a change in the present social structure. Changes have become necessary in the caste system.

The nation's commitment to change has several roots. There is increasing realisation of the awfully high cost of caste. In economic life it limits the availability of both needed labour and income-producing work, and multiplies needlessly the requirements of certain goods and services. The worst restrictions of caste are damaging to the development of individual personality. It restricts unduly an individual's choice of vocation, habitation, friends and marriage partner. It jeopardises men's loyalty to wider groups which is basic to the healthy life of local and national communities. Fundamental to this realisation is the increasing value which is placed upon "individual freedom". This value was widely embraced in Europe several generations ago. No doubt it is truly a value but like any other good it can carry evil with it, especially when it is overstressed. Perhaps in India it must be overstressed now to overcome apathy and to provide motivation to the fight against many social evils including those of caste. But, we must take care that in the stress we put upon individual freedom, we do not let it become an individualism which breaks up society and fragments personality. We need not imitate the West in its failures. Instead we must heed the warning of the West that individuality should be balanced by an emphasis on social responsibility. Hence our concern with a social structure as an alternative to traditional caste structure.

Ideal Types and Ways of Change

How may the goal of the present social change, in terms of social structure, be reached ? In answering this question, a

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now-classical three-fold typology of an individual's (or a group's) relationship to the social structure may be useful. In the first 'ideal' type, individuals behave largely according to the rules of behaviour laid down by the customs and/or laws of society. They are directed, as it were, not from within themselves but from without. Such a situation we may call heteronomy. The pattern of caste structure in India approximates to this type. In the second type, individuals tend to live very much as a law unto themselves. They are self-directing. This we call autonomy. In our day it is probably most closely approached by radical individualism. In the third type of society, individuals, while remaining fully themselves, find integration (amongst themselves and with their surroundings) in transcendental ends which are usually influenced by their religion. This we call theonomy—or perhaps better (with E. Troeltsch) auto-theonomy. This would seem to be our goal. These types of structures tend to shade off into each other in a circular manner—the first into the second, the second into the third, and the third into the first. For instance : the temptation of an auto-theonomously structured society is toward heteronomy. And in order to reach a situation of auto-theonomy we may expect to pass through a period of autonomy. That is why secular individualism (an attempt at autonomy) is relevant to India today as it helps to break up outmoded static social patterns such as caste.

There are two major ways of changing society. One, the way of radical discontinuity which breaks entirely with the past. This is the way of the French Revolution and of the Russian Revolution, although it may not necessarily involve bloodshed. When the upper status groups in a society are closed, unchanging and unyielding this may be the only available path of change. The other way is that of continuity. It is probably best typified in the far-reaching changes that have taken place in the British social structure. For India, either of these ways would involve rather extensive social planning. It must be recognized in this connection that there is a certain amount of irrationality in the social results of social planning. Seldom, if ever, the results are exactly that which the planners originally want. This irrationality seems to be directly proportional to the firmness (which may increase to fanaticism) with which any plan is imposed. And it tends to the minimum with the way of continuity and the maximum with the way of discontinuity. The path of continuity integrates some elements of the traditional society into the new social structure ; thus it may create

the basis for a certain maturity which a society which has utterly rejected its historical past cannot have.

The caste structure may seem so unyielding as to require radical discontinuity if change is to come in the society which it dominates. Closer examination, however, shows that this is not necessarily so. The caste structure is, in fact, changing throughout India. It isn't dying, as most social optimists try to believe, but it is changing. Untouchability is much less observed these days, as are also the customs of the traditional feudal patron-client relationship. Many aspects of these modes have become illegal since 1947. On the other hand, politics and certain other new social institutions have become new modes for expressing caste distinctions and caste loyalties. This is called casteism since it differs so radically from the classical modes of caste observances.

An Alternative to Caste

An alternative social structure must provide for its members a firm basis for their feeling of social, economic and emotional well-being. This is often called "security". But it must be constantly kept in mind that this basis must be provided in different ways for different times. It was rather well provided for many generations by the caste system in which many found acceptance, assurance of their social role, and a good measure of economic security. The inability of many people today to put caste aside is no doubt related to the fact that it is a concrete structure which did serve this purpose well. The temptation to cling to the concrete, even though it may be useless or even largely evil in the present, is not unnatural when the only alternative is to venture toward a new structure as yet unrealized. Yet it must be clearly recognised that no matter how adequate the caste structure may have been in its own time, now it has become largely irrelevant. With the widening acceptance and observation of new social values, and the great new cultural factors such as democracy, industrialisation, urbanisation, and spread of education, the caste system has now become both inadequate and a real hindrance to progress. The new security which we seek may not be much different in function from that which our forefathers found in caste but to perform such a function in such vastly different circumstances the structure in which it is found must probably be very different from caste in form. Caste provided almost complete definition of social roles throughout all time. Our new values lead us not to want this

now ; we want mobility, we want opportunity. But emotionally we cannot long function well in utter chaos. So even in a dynamic society there should be an order or pattern even if it is a pattern of change. The new structure must also offer an area for the development and expression of tender-loving care, mutual concern, and acceptance, in which the personalities of children and adults alike may grow with some possibility of wholeness and maturity. Because of our new social values and institutions these factors may be found by the individual in a number of different groups rather than in the rather restricted joint-family or caste group as before.

Probably this means that an alternative social structure ought to involve as much as possible of what has been called *koinonia* since the beginning of Christianity. This is not necessarily to say that all members of the society are to participate together in what might be called "Christian *koinonia*". Rather, that *koinonia* the divine society provides by analogy, the concept of the best type for any society. The relevance of the concept of *koinonia* insofar as it offers insight into the meaning and nature of community may be seen when it is noted that both local governments and various agencies at the Centre are increasingly devoting great effort to the development of communities. Perhaps we ought not to expect many people in our time to attain any very perfect community together as a group—although there will certainly be an important place for those groups who form themselves into "intentional" communities and thus lead the way and become an example for the rest of us. Because of this, and also because of the temper of the time and the influence of urbanism, perhaps our goal of community would be more realistic if it indicated that each individual may find aspects of this goal in more than one of the social groups in which he participates. A man may approach community in his working group, his family, his club, his neighbourhood group, his sports group, his religious group and elsewhere. The social structure should be such that he is enabled, perhaps even encouraged, to more closely approach it in all of these groups.

An alternative social structure must be based on alternative social goals and values which are really accepted by the members of society. If it is not, it will soon cease to be the real society in which men and women live and move. Of course, people's social goals and values can be changed through education and planning, but such changes are rather small—certainly

much smaller than what most theorists take it to be. Then too, the direction of change as the result of planning and education is probably much less predictable than many have wishfully thought. To some extent, therefore, it would seem that a new social structure must be formed with close reference to whatever values and goals members of the particular society happen to hold dear at a particular time. Some of our Five-Year Plan social targets have not been reached just because they were too far beyond and very little related to the feelings and ideals of those whom they were meant to help. This is brought out frequently in Community Development evaluations—especially, in descriptions of various attempts at starting co-operatives without laying the necessary groundwork of understanding and acceptance. This method of "force-feeding" seems to have killed more co-operatives than it has developed in some areas. Often the task of Christian social witness is conceived in terms of offering a blue-print for an ideal alternative social structure. Nothing can be more futile than this approach. Our task is not to introduce new structures but rather to influence as best as we can the tide of the change which is taking place. To do anything else is really to withdraw from influencing the structure at all. Standing in the sidelines preaching about a model society is really irrelevant. It is in reality non-participation. Of course, the exact nature of the influence we may bring to bear on any particular situation must be based on our analysis of the situation and our judgment about it in terms of Christian values. Because the situation is constantly changing, no doubt, are practical judgments will also be constantly changing.

Logically the only alternative to a caste structured society must be a class structured society. Yet there are so many possibilities between the abstract poles of pure caste and pure class that it may be worth while to explore some of them. One such possibility, not very far removed from a rather thoroughgoing caste structure, is that in which there is a rather clearly defined ruling class of overlords but with some real possibility for social mobility from class to class by individuals. In such a structure, as in caste, there will be a clear-cut hierarchical structure in which every individual knows with certainty exactly who his superiors, equals and inferiors are. Structures of this kind have existed in Germanic Europe and elsewhere. It is the kind which might be expected to develop in the newer states of Asia whose leaders feel that their people are not yet "ready" for full democracy. In India we reject this idea because of our full commitment to democracy. But it offers a real alter-

native to caste. Actually this is not far from the structure implied in the ideas of the not inconsiderable number of intellectuals who feel that India must have some kind of "guided democracy" for some time to come.

In contrast to the "top heavy" structure outlined above a class structure might centre its authority in a rather wider community of the people. No doubt such a broad-based structure is more suitable for the democracy which we are building up in India. It may approximate to one of the two following forms :

I. It may tend toward a rather tight, formal, contractual community both at the national level and at local levels. Formal and actual political democracy can take root and grow in such a structure. Probably in this kind of structure the tendency will be to develop a rather clear single hierarchy of social classes. It may be predicted that senior Government officers and officials will compose a large part of the upper class in such a structure in contemporary India.

II. Or it may tend toward a more informal community, at least at levels below the national. Such a structure would allow room for and provide the soil for the growth of many informal and non-official groups and societies. Its social class hierarchy might be pluralistic with people from various kinds of groups occupying overlapping status positions and with the general status position of each individual being determined by his status in informal as well as in official groups. It will be argued below that this structure is the best possible basis for the development and preservation of the kind of democracy India has adopted. It is the structure furthest removed from the historical caste structure. For this reason, it may be the most difficult to achieve since radical changes are required for its achievement.

Loci of Orientation

The caste structure of society is bad ; but the chaos resulting from its complete breakdown, without the simultaneous emergence of a suitable alternative structure, may be worse. This is the legitimate basis for the fears sometimes expressed that "progressives" in tearing down the caste system are tearing something of worth. Probably in looking for clues for an alternative structure we must look into the many areas of social organization to find some aspects which are actually coming to prominence and which hold promise of providing the individuals involved in them with a firm basis for their feeling of

social, economic and emotional well-being. That is, with a "security" equivalent to that which the historical caste structure once provided its members. This will involve looking at parts of our present social structure to find what may or must be encouraged as "locii of orientation" in the alternative structure which we seek. Some such possible locii are: The individual, as in extreme individualism, the organisation by which one is employed or in which one works, the new pattern of marriage and family, nationalism, political parties, community, welfare State, business or profit-making, voluntary associations, institutional religion, education and recreation. Of these locii the following meet the test of being compatible contemporary tendencies which may offer adequate alternatives to the caste structure.

(1) *Marriage.* This has already been treated in rapid-social change studies on the family and it will be treated more fully in a forthcoming book under the auspices of the Committee for Literature on Social Concerns. It is at present a real major area of social change. Therefore operation in this area does not require any artificial social manipulation. The change is there and it only requires direction to desirable goals.

The satisfaction and loving affection which marriage partners find between themselves and in the family of parents and children may offer much of that "security" which is required in an alternative locus. And further the family is the context in which almost all men and women learn their basic attitudes and get trained to live as members of society. If attitudes and feelings regarding marriage change then we would expect change in the basic social attitudes learned by the children of the marriage within the family. It is frequently observed that young urban marriage partners are increasingly concerned with mutual respect for personality between themselves and also (almost abnormally so, by way of reaction perhaps) with respect for the personalities of their children as they rear them.

Marriage is also a crucial area for the total abolition of caste, just as it is basic for the perpetuation of caste in every mode. Experience shows that even among Christian and Islamic groups which have a religious bias against caste and seek to eradicate it, it is precisely at the point of marriage contract that caste hangs on most tenaciously.

Even though some of the popular fictions, films, and other means of mass communication imported from the West have

evils, under thoughtful guidance they may help in a desirable reform of the pattern of marriage. The recent legal enactments providing women equality with men before the law in many aspects of marriage are a constructive social fact now operating in this area.

The Christian must also be concerned with the theological fact that the one-flesh relationship which is possible in marriage (and which in part is just the "security" mentioned above) may be as important to *all* man-man relationships as the eucharistic relationship is to all man-God relationships.

(2) *Community.* As an available locus this is where wider care, support and acceptance may be found and given within a natural group without fragmenting society as the caste group does. The relation of community *koinoma* has already been mentioned. Some have suggested that a different word less related to "communalism" would make for easier understanding of the concept of community in India. However, the word "community" is now getting a new meaning. It is being forcefully promoted as a locus for social reorganization by various Departments of Government at many different levels and also by many intellectuals of a wide variety of persuasions for urban society as well as for rural society.

Perhaps in our time the way toward community must be led by certain people who come together and form themselves into full-time "intentional" communities like the *Asrams.* Some groups of persons related to the *Sarvodaya* movement have done this, as have some religious groups. But more such dedicated examples are necessary in all parts of contemporary society, particularly in the cities where the need and the difficulties for community are great. In addition to serving as experiments and examples, such "intentional" communities may also serve as a locus of organization and values for many who though not members are related to them in a spiritual sense. Sevagram served many in this secondary way.

Here, and elsewhere in this chapter, there is a certain stress on aspects of social organization which contribute to psychic health and wholeness of personality. Psychic wholeness is no doubt an important social criterion. However, a caution should be entered at this point. Today throughout Protestantism there is a tendency (probably stemming from North America) to connect and even to identify Christianity with individual psychology (often a psychology of adjustment). We must take

care lest this leads to a new pietism with all of the social and theological pitfalls of the old.

(3) *Voluntary Associations.* These are non-prescriptive and non-governmental organizations of short or long duration and having at least on the local level, many of the aspects of interpersonal intimacy, care, support, and acceptance which characterise a community. However, while a community involves full-time participation such a voluntary association does not. Any individual may be a member of a number of voluntary associations, and may be involved in each to a different degree. It is difficult, especially in urban society, to realize full communities. Voluntary associations are here presented as a realistic approach to community—given the nature of our society. They could give the typical modern individual, who probably will not be involved in an ideal community, an opportunity to approach the values of community in various parts and areas of his life. Probably in this life this is as close as most of us can come to experiencing "community". Perhaps it is the failure to realise this that has led to the failure of so many utopian community experiments throughout history. Conversely, "community" in the sense of neighbourhood, solidarity, loyalty, and social intercourse, which is the sense in which the Government mostly attempts to encourage it, is sometimes so wide as to be abstract, or at least dilute. Just because each voluntary association tends to be primarily concerned with only a small part of life the relationships within it may be more intense. This potential intensity is also increased by the fact that individuals will tend to become active participants only in those voluntary associations which function in an area in which they have a definite interest.

In addition to being realistic approximations to community, voluntary associations may also become a training ground for political democracy. Since each voluntary association is self-governing it offers all of the experiences of self-government on a small scale to its members. In it they may learn to appreciate the difficulties of government and to judge realistically the kind of government they are given or offered by various politicians and political parties. In it they get opportunities for leadership and thus prepare themselves for leadership in wider areas, political or social. The fact that they have succeeded in minor roles also tends to qualify them in the eyes of others for larger roles.

Many political philosophers believe that the voluntary associations with their exercises in freedom and social responsibility at various levels are quite important for the survival of political democracy.

In the political realm a firm foundation for voluntary associations in India can come only by passing *through* the many inter-group tensions which we have today. Attempts to avoid them or to find an abstract ideal solution to them will only make them more destructive. Take the language tensions, for instance. If one group imposes its language on the others, there is a solution but at the cost of democracy. But if the tensions continue within the limits set by national unity, the people *may* learn to live with the differences even though this involves the possibility of renewal of tensions from time to time. When a people thus learn to live with group differences we will have a social situation fertile for the growth of voluntary associations. In fact the groups of people most interested in particular aspects of particular languages will themselves be voluntary associations. Such associations would be locii of organization of the kind sought above and they would also be ever watchful against political domination in the area of their special interest (in this case language). Perhaps a vital value of inter-group relationship in a democracy, which is 'live and let live', can be fully accepted in any society only after passing through a period of unresolvable opposition between groups none of which is able to dominate the others. If this is the case, India is already well served by a batch of conflicts—linguistic, provincial and caste. It is even possible to dream that caste groupings after being purged in such a conflict might be reconciled to live together in the mutual recognition of each other's equality. This may seem far-fetched but it is not too far from the kind of situation in which the Western democratic tradition of toleration first grew.

It is significant that voluntary associations like the Rotary Clubs and Lions Clubs are becoming increasingly popular among urban business and professional men in India. They are grasped like straws by the urban man because they do provide a centre of reorganisation of social life. Some of these associations are too Western and therefore may not serve the purpose as it should. But it is a challenge to develop associations which have a creative relation to India's cultural heritage.

(4) *State Functions.* These may not properly be locii of social organization. But as the State takes over functions of wel-

fare and education formerly performed by caste, the caste structure itself becomes proportionately less compelling a necessity. This is also true of recreation as it gets secularised and taken out of the caste context. They are therefore important aspects of the alternate social structure toward which we are looking.

Conclusion

There is great temptation in some circles including the Christian to consider the supreme worth of the individual person as *the* basis of criticism of caste and individualism as *the* answer to it. From this view-point the episode dealing with Peter and the unclean things is a most telling starting point. But to counterbalance this, reference may be made to the conflict between Paul and Peter over the observance of ritual laws of cleanliness at meals of the Christian community (Gal. 2 : 11 ff.). For Christians, *koinonia* and not individualism is the ultimate goal and criterion of society. And the overcoming of legalistic social barriers is a clear and important aspect of *koinonia*. It should be both demanded and sought not only at the Lord's table, but in all social intercourse. As *koinonia* is the foretaste of the redemption of all societies, it must also be the fundamental basis for the Christian contribution to India's understanding and reorganisation of society.

THE CHURCH AND SERVICE IN THE NEW INDIA*

THE Church in India today is faced with new problems and new opportunities. The increasing impact of contemporary non-Christian life and thought calls Christians to courageous adventure into new areas of witness and service. This may involve a withdrawal from certain old and familiar fields of activity. This should not be regarded as a retreat or a defeat but a beginning of a new advance into new fields.

CHANGE HAS MEANT OPPORTUNITY

The Church in the past has been faced with similar challenges. The apologists used the categories of Hellenistic thought to preach the Gospel in the Gentile world; to-day she is faced with a similar challenge from renascent Hinduism. The Industrial Revolution found the Church largely unprepared to face new situations, and she was tempted to repeat old slogans which were no longer applicable; but the Methodists went out to reach the new unchurched masses of the industrial cities and later the Christian Socialists began to criticise the assumptions of individualism. Recently, the Ecumenical Movement has tried to grapple with the whole problem of industrial society. To-day, the Church in India is faced with a new era of planning within the welfare State. Here too she has to consider how she may be of service in a world where Christ is Lord even if unrecognised and unacknowledged. Christian love and the ministry of reconciliation are still to be exercised but in new fields and under new conditions.

CHRISTIAN INVOLVEMENT

Inevitably this has to be done within the context of increasing State activity and in co-operation with those who are not

* This is one of the Commission Reports of a Consultation on *The Life and Mission of the Church*, arranged in March 1958, at Bangalore, by the SCM of India in co-operation with the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society and the National Christian Council of India. The Report speaks about the new context of Christian Service on which the March issue of *Religion and Society* dealt with. It also touches on the relation between modern India's search for a new philosophy and pattern of social living and the reformation and renewal of Hinduism that is taking place in the country. Hence its relevance to the present issue of *Religion and Society*. For a fuller account of the Consultation on the *Life and Mission of the Church*, please see the September issue of *Darsan*, the periodical of the Student Christian Movement of India, 2 Mission Road, Bangalore-2.

Christians. Under what conditions can this collaboration be offered and accepted ? The Christian who worships in the local congregation is also a voter, a member of a trade union or a chamber of commerce. He is a citizen as well as churchman and is called to relate the insights that he receives in worship, the love that is Christ formed in him, to the secular world in which he has to live.

In the welfare State, Christian service will not be institutionally protected but it will be a true witness to the world, in the world. The Christian teacher or doctor in a State institution will escape from loneliness into fellowship with those in whom there lives the Spirit of Christ so that 'where two or three are gathered together' fellowship (*koinonia*) and service (*diakonia*) will rediscover one another. A handful of Christians meeting together for prayer or discussion in the tiffin hour during a factory break on a week day, will prove to be 'the local congregation', and the Church will flourish in a multitude of tiny cells within the fabric of secular society. It will also lead to a new understanding of *kerygma*, not only as a message of salvation for the individual but also as salvation for the whole of society, not as sermons but the gospel proclaimed by the layman in and through his work. The service of the Church will be directed to the layman who works in the world. 'The Church must form the layman ; the layman must transform the world'. This new lay vocation in a secular world will demand a new type of piety, changes in worship, different types of devotion as well as a new dynamic relationship with non-Christian associates in the common tasks of social life.

One of the most remarkable features of Indian society in recent years has been its rapid industrialization. The Five-Year Plans set as their goal a high degree of industrialization together with the achievement of democratic socialism. This phenomenon has had two major effects : the increase and growth of industrial cities and the impact of these cities on villages. The city-dweller is facing new social situations and the villager finds his established pattern of society disrupted.

The pattern and the structure of the Church were largely designed for the villages in traditional India. They are becoming, in large measure, irrelevant both to the city and to the village as they are to-day, and must be modified in the face of this new situation. (We are here not dealing with the effects of industrialization on the village.)

A major pastoral problem in the cities is that Christian immigrants get lost from the Church. Many, for various reasons, do not become members of congregations in the city, and the Church does not have any way of seeking them out. There is a need for much more effectively functioning channels of information between Churches regarding movements of Church members. One reason for the indifference and lack of participation on the part of Christian immigrants in city Churches is that these mostly are middle class in outlook. The Church must go where the people are, both physically and emotionally.

Persons with particular suitability must be found and trained to be pastors in these urban industrial population centres. Special training may be given in the theological colleges as well as through contact with industrial situations. Inspiration and guidance for advance in this field may be found in the work done by, for instance, Missions de France, the Iona Community in Scotland, the Anglican Industrial Mission in Sheffield, and the Franciscans in London. A commendable beginning has been made by the United Church of Northern India through a pilot industrial pastoral project in Kanpur.

Laymen have a particular responsibility in these situations, and it would be important to give special training, including a measure of theological training, to lay leaders who are factory workers so that they may become better equipped to use the opportunities of their own environment. Only laymen who are labourers seem able to communicate well with labourers, whether Christian or non-Christian ; the middle class layman is often acceptable neither to the Christian nor the non-Christian labourer ; the clergymen who come from a non-industrial milieu are seldom acceptable to non-Christian labourers.

New institutional patterns to fit this situation might include :

1. Christian *ashrams* and communities in city slums ;
2. Social Service Centres, such as the Nagpada Community House in Bombay initiated by the American Marathi Mission ;
3. Labour Relations Institutes, such as that in Jamshedpur, started by the Roman Catholic Church, for the purpose of promoting better Labour-Management relationships and training of Labour Union Leaders ;
4. Literary and technical education for the working classes.

The Church may also lead in developing patterns of Basic Education in the cities and in the study of religious and ethical transformations in the industrial situation.

The Church can still render useful service in these changed conditions through its members in schools, colleges, and other institutions of learning. There is great need for social investigation before any intelligent social action can be taken. Colleges which have a sociology department can make a special contribution in this regard, but others also can train their students to be able to assess the new situations properly. Extension service in the cities, such as the study of urban conditions, and various forms of adult education, is of great value. Examples of this are the night schools conducted by students of the Hislop College in Nagpur, and other Christian colleges.

The Welfare State and Christian Institutions

The Church is also confronted with new situations because of the acceptance by the country of the new concept of the secular welfare State. In the changing situation there is a need for a continuing reappraisal with regard to each Christian institution of its usefulness in relation to the Church and to the nation. No doubt the Church should welcome the secular welfare State but this means that the State will be taking over responsibility for many institutions and organisations from private agencies. Church-owned schools, colleges, hospitals, orphanages, and other institutions may soon have to make a decision about handing over control to the State. When the State takes major responsibility for teaching and healing institutions, then the Church—which has pioneered in the foundation of such institutions during the time when the need was great—may utilize its resources in other directions. However, certain institutions may be kept as Christian institutions and used as places of experiment and example in developing new Christ-informed educational and medical patterns relevant to contemporary India. These, and other institutions as well, particularly in the educational field, may be kept under Christian management to conserve varied patterns of educational structure which, just like the private and public sectors of industry, seem to be so important for the survival and development of democratic pluralism and the social philosophy underlying it. With the growing awareness of these factors among the people it may become possible later on for parents and the local community

to participate more actively in the management of schools for their children. Regimentation of school curriculum by complete State control might ultimately lead to the use of schools for political indoctrination. Therefore, the State responsibility in education should be exercised through autonomous bodies mainly of educationists.

There is much opposition to the giving up of any of their teaching and healing institutions from within the official councils of the Churches and from individual Christians. Whereas we acknowledge that in most cases this opposition stems from genuine ideological and religious scruples, it must be stressed that it sometimes comes from selfish involvement in particular situations, and sometimes from lack of vision.

The Church should also become aware of the need for new kinds of professional training, suited to the requirements of industrialization, such as training in labour welfare and industrial management as well as technological training. In this regard, the YWCA and the YMCA may take the initiative, as was done in the case of the Delhi School of Social Work.

Facilities for training of laymen and women to fulfil their Christian calling in their secular vocation may be provided by the Church as well as by organisations, such as the YWCA and the YMCA. This can be done by giving short extension courses, holding seminars, etc. Fuller use may be made in this respect of institutions like the YWCA's at Anandagiri, the Spiritual Life Centre at Nasrapur and the Christian Retreat and Study Centre at Rajpur.

An Adequate Social Philosophy

The Church in India should be actively concerned in the efforts of the nation in political, economic, and social development as expressed in the Five-Year Plans. A higher standard of living is welcome as a means to the good life God has ordained for man. The Church should urge the people, both Christian and non-Christian, to participate in the reconstruction plans while at the same time warning against Utopian hopes that will bring disillusionment. The Church must be the source of social enthusiasm and social realism.

In India, this time of social and political reconstruction is also a time of search for the true foundations of society and State. Industrial society, political democracy, welfare State, national community—all these require a new ethos, a new cul-

tural basis. And much of the ferment in the ideological, philosophical and religious life of the country today are an indication of the nation's search for an adequate social philosophy. Secularism, Communism, and Renascent Hinduism are the new frontiers of life in which the nation is making its choice about the ultimate meaning of life and the future pattern of society. It is precisely in relation to these three factors—Secularism, Communism and Renascent Hinduism—that the Church and its members confront the opportunity (*a*) to share the understanding of man and the world which is implicit in the Christian faith ; (*b*) to make Christ known as the Truth which saves and renews all creation. These two tasks are related immediately to our common search for a true philosophy of the welfare State. Here proclamation of the Gospel and social service become integrated.

The Task of the Laity

This task, however, should not be understood primarily as one for the clergy, the theologian and the evangelist. It is a task in the main of the theologically informed Christian laymen who are engaged along with men of other faiths and no faith in the complex technicalities of politics, economics, education and community development, and who are themselves engaged with their colleagues in the search for an adequate social philosophy for their area of life. There may be cases where theologically informed Christian laymen may wish to be ordained while remaining in their secular vocation as is already happening in certain dioceses in the CSI. Similarly, there may be clergymen ready to take up industrial employment in order to become involved in labour situations. It is only as Christians and non-Christians share a common spiritual and intellectual struggle in their search for meaning in the new setting, that Christian insights can come alive and be communicated. Here there is place not only for the individual Christian in secular work but also for lay Christian institutions and organisations active in the field of reconstruction.

If this task is to be accomplished by Christian laymen, they must be theologically informed. The tasks of the clergy and the theologian, therefore, become more and not less difficult, and demand a new sensitiveness to the world and to the language of the people.

The Church should have groups of theologians who are engaged in the study of Secularism and Renascent Hinduism as

they take new forms in India and meet them at the philosophical and theological levels also. This should involve not only research in the study but also living contact with non-Christian philosophers and religious thinkers. It is necessary that opportunities of common meeting between Christians and non-Christians be used where possible for discussion on deeper social and religious issues.

New Social Patterns

The search for a social philosophy is associated with the emergence of new patterns of community other than the traditional ones of joint-family, caste and village. Indeed, with the disintegration of the traditional social patterns, individuals—men and women—feel liberated ; but without the security of the old society, they also feel lost. This is at the root of much of the demoralisation and corruption in the political, economic and social life of the country today. And the answer to it is in building communities which can do justice to the new sense of freedom and equality among the people. The question of the new social goals and the moral basis of individuality are vital problems for the nation. Here again Christianity has a significant contribution to make. Especially the local congregation has vital but largely untapped resources for the development of a new sense of common life in India.

The effort of adaptation to new situations and the search for new fields of action should by no means lead us to forget the most essential "service" of the Church, which is and remains to be an instrument of salvation and of witnessing to the "one thing needful". Thus, in facing the new problems of the welfare State we do not want to level down the Church to a "welfare Church". We see the new situation as a purifying challenge to the Church to recognise her mission to be not merely a "nurse" or a philanthropic factor for humanity but "a sign lifted up among the nations" for salvation and judgement.

I. THE CHRISTIAN CONTRIBUTION TO THE NATION'S SEARCH FOR A CASTELESS PATTERN OF SOCIETY

The Nation's Search

With the attainment of Independence, our nation was confronted with both the opportunities and the problems of effective democratic national planning. It was set down in the Constitution that untouchability should be outlawed and all practices of discrimination between castes and communities should be given up. It was realised, however, that social justice would still demand that constitutional safeguards and special privileges should be provided for underprivileged castes, for a specified period of time.

Perhaps, the greatest incentive to the search for a casteless pattern of society in India came from the shock of the realisation that caste had given rise to economic inequality and social injustice in national life. Caste had caused such a rigid stratification of society that individual initiative had been very largely suppressed and personality circumscribed by rules of propriety and standards of judgement and behaviour dictated by caste. Even in the nineteenth century, political liberalism went hand in hand with social concern in India and this happy tendency was marked also in Gandhiji's leadership of the nation. The influence of more than a hundred years of Christianity and the emphasis of Islam on brotherhood over an even longer period were also not ineffective. More positively, the setting aside of a caste pattern has been seen to be necessary for national integration and the achievement of the democratic ideals of justice, equality and social harmony.

The major political parties in the country have openly declared that we should work towards a socialistic pattern of society which would be possible only with the breaking up or the withering away of caste. All national planning also has scrupulously rejected caste considerations except in so far as it was necessary to give reality to the concept of equality through measures of justice to raise the status of and to provide opportunities of growth for the depressed castes.

The State as the executive machinery for the expression of the will of the people, has undertaken measures which have directly or indirectly had the effect of reducing caste consciousness and creating larger areas of national social enterprise where caste may be transcended. Thus several functions formerly fulfilled by caste are now discharged by the State and its agencies. Even from before the days of Independence, education at all levels, common hostels, industrialisation, common places of work and the Army had served the purpose of enabling people to work and assemble together without consciousness or scruples of caste. This process was speeded up after Independence, through the Bharat Sevak Samaj, Bharat Scouts and Guides, rural development and other welfare schemes. Special programmes calculated to achieve development of community sentiment such as Basic Education have even more effectively mitigated caste consciousness and caste prejudices. Social legislation (particularly laws which affect the Hindu family) is releasing forces which can help individuals break away from caste. The liberalising of laws of succession, and the making of marriage more a matter of individual relationship than a family alliance, enables people not to be so bound to the social customs and controls of the caste system as they were in the past.

Voluntary agencies and even some organisations with primarily political objectives have also undertaken programmes which have helped to break down the rigour of the caste structure. For example, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam recognises caste only to try to disintegrate it by the encouragement of inter-caste marriages. The Sarvodaya Movement has not merely the moral support of the nation at large and the enthusiastic, if informal, recognition of the State ; but it has been hailed as a movement embodying principles of truth, justice, equality and simplicity as the basis of national life, which might, in the years to come, be recognised as India's contribution to the social philosophy of the whole world. The new social structure envisaged by this Movement and inaugurated on a small scale in practical measures like *Gramdan* is a classless, casteless, village commonwealth ; in short, community in the place of a loose federation of castes.

We have to be engaged not only in the task of breaking down caste but also of building up a new society. We have to recognise that caste did fulfil certain deep-seated needs of men

such as those of security and recognition. It also provided him with a ready-made code of morals and manners which enabled him live with the minimum of uncertainty and crisis. These needs were met, however, at the cost of individual freedom, social equality and economic progress to which India is today awake. Therefore, the inadequacy of the static caste structure even to meet the needs it formerly met and the necessity to disturb it for the sake of a more dynamic social order are clear. There are, however, two points which we need to consider. First, men and women will cling to the old until they are hopeful of alternative provisions for satisfying their fundamental needs of security, recognition and direction on a new level. This accounts for a great deal of resistance among people to necessary social change in our country. Secondly, if men and women are led from one social structure into a social vacuum, the resulting anarchy may be worse than the present evils. This fear is very real among thinkers today and is one of the factors that contribute to the strength of conservative reaction. The pace at which we destroy caste can be, and perhaps must be, commensurate with our resources for finding and using alternatives. This is not a justification for the slowing down of the destruction of caste, but an argument for a quickening of the pace of provision of alternatives which do greater justice to our new sense of human rights and social justice. In other words, we need understanding as much as courage to reform society—the understanding that helps to distinguish between the utopian and the realistic.

Both the study of society and the Christian doctrine of man convince us that man in society is in fact a many-sided person and that he has several different needs. Any attempt to satisfy these needs with one rigid social pattern such as caste or communist society results sooner or later in the suppression of individuality and the frustration of several creative aspects of personality. The search for an alternative, we are convinced, should, therefore, be the search for and recognition of the many factors that would work together for the development of the different aspects of the personality of man. We should, in other words, not expect one single structure as an alternative. Instead, the several functions formely performed by caste may be taken over by a variety of social institutions. Because of this necessary fragmentation of the means of developing personality, it is all the more necessary to provide for wholeness and meaning through participation in community life.

In the present context in India, we can already see a number of social institutions which together give us at least a dim vision of a new social pattern of life slowly emerging out of the changes, guided and otherwise, which are now taking place in the life of the nation. The Welfare State, by providing economic security and social welfare is to that extent relieving caste of these functions. Loyalty to the nation, the symbolisation of the nation through the national flag, songs and celebrations, strong sentiments for language even where it is used mainly as a vehicle for the expression of modern ideas, general education and common reading rooms, all cater for the need for building up loyalties and a new sense of values. Co-operatives, panchayats, trade unions and professional associations and housing schemes give people a sense of belonging to groups within which the individual can find fellowship, sympathy and conversation, and can exercise initiative. A man's creative faculties can also be brought into play outside the caste structure through community entertainment such as folk-dancing and the staging of plays.

In all these social agencies now at work we have to recognise the possibility of the corruption and perversion of objectives by the persistence of the spirit of caste. We should also not be so complacent as to believe that a gradual evolution is taking place which will eventually eliminate caste from Indian society. On the other hand, being aware of the tendency of institutions to harden into vested interests and of the tendency of enthusiasms to cool off, we should try to give conscious and judicious direction to the forces which we hope will furnish the social alternatives to caste.

Caste attitudes are largely passed from generation to generation through the family. The present changing pattern of the family and growing new ideas of the home may indicate a change in this respect since it is very largely based on the new positive values and goals of freedom for the individual and respect for and full development of his whole personality. These should logically preclude the continuation of caste in any form. But the pace at which the change is taking place in this sphere leaves much to be desired. Not infrequently, conformity to the patterns of caste is forced upon enlightened young people by their families. Therefore, any thorough-going effort to abolish caste will not succeed unless there is also a determined attempt to break into the chain of transmission of caste attitudes and behaviour at the family level.

The Christian Contribution

The Church has great potentialities for social witness. I has many resources in its educational institutions, hospitals, youth movements and *ashrams*, through which it has expressed its concern for all regardless of status. Other Christian organisations, such as the SCM, YWCA and YMCA, through their activities of study and action have helped their members transcend caste. The task, however, is still unfinished, and the Church can make fuller use of these existing organisations, in furthering ideas of social equality and dignity of the human person. New activities such as inexpensive holiday homes which will bring families belonging to different castes into fellowship, and community and recreation centres can also help further the sense of community. In the Church there has not yet been a sufficient sense of urgency and realism in its social thinking and action. The intellectual resources of the Church have not been fully tapped. Available expert knowledge and the experience of laymen in the fields of social enquiry have to be counted among these resources. The Christian colleges again have possibilities for study and research in the social sciences. Above all, we have a perennial source of inspiration in the Scriptures and the spiritual fellowship of the Church.

On the national level at present, there is a great deal of concerned thought and experimentation regarding social structure and control of social forces. Perhaps the most effective way in which the Church can help the nation in its search for a casteless society today is by taking part in them, offering its own special insights based on the Christian understanding of man and society. Both clergy and laity have to be equipped for such participation. Theological colleges might with great advantage offer a short course on the fundamentals of the social sciences to their students and equip them for enlightened pastoral ministration in conditions of social change. But it would be mainly the duty of laymen already involved in the different areas of national and social life to undertake the responsibility for the social concern of the Church. Means should be found to provide them with a certain measure of teaching in the fundamentals of the Christian faith, and acquaint them with the Christian social thinking in the past tradition of the Church and in the World Council of Churches. Both the Church and nation would be greatly benefited if laymen became conscious of their Christian vocation in society.

The Church in India today is no longer the pioneer in many types of humanistic and creative work. Some of the national, secular movements and non-Christian religious movements have mobilised their resources in directing the nation along creative lines. It is time that the Christian realised more fully, that as Lord of the Universe Jesus Christ is active not only in the Church but also in the world for the fulfilment of His purpose. While the Church may still be called upon to undertake work in hitherto unexplored fields, it seems evident that, by and large, the social responsibility of the Church at the present time is to participate in the ongoing movements of national development in India. In such participation, however, the Church should remember that it has both the right and the obligation to evaluate and criticise these movements from inside in the light of the highest values and insights granted to us in Christ. It is in this spirit of humility and service that we as a Church are called upon to go forth and take our place in the national striving for a casteless pattern of society and national community.

II. THE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP (*KOINONIA*) AND CASTE WITHIN THE CHURCH

Preamble

Caste and the problems connected with it have their roots deeply established in India over a long period of time. Its hold and influence among Christians as well as non-Christians have not been eradicated. On the other hand, while there has been a noticeable decrease in external observances of caste practices there has been, of recent times, a recrudescence of group consciousness inspired by the caste spirit. Therefore, the need to restate the Church's understanding of the nature of caste is urgent and imperative.

In the past century, caste has interested the Christian enterprise only in so far as it concerned the task of evangelism. Group conversions in some areas tended to emphasise the need for preserving certain social and cultural values associated with the caste structure. People were urged to give up caste practices directly opposed to the Christian view of God and man, but ideas and notions which did not seem to openly violate Christian convictions were permitted to prevail. This approach did not come to grips with the real issue which concerns the very nature of caste as a social institution. It is this, in the new context, that the Church has to face in all earnestness. A similar ferment of thought is noticeable in the present-day Hindu society and has led to some serious thinking in the country.

The Christian Fellowship (*Koinonia*)—Meaning and Implications

Koinonia refers to the household of God held together by a common bond in a relation where the redeeming activity of God in Christ is the central factor. It is a community in which there is a constant challenge given increasingly to acknowledge the rule of God and also to increasingly realise its obligations to reach out to the world through meaningful witness and appropriate social action. The local congregation may be looked upon as a group, a social unit in relation to other social units, but it is certainly more than that and essentially is the meeting place for all streams and conditions of life which need to be vitalised by the dynamic power of Christ. The Church has, therefore, to play a part in all spheres of life. Its

fellowship in Christ not only provides the criteria to judge whether the principles and practices in the varied realms of life are in accordance with the Christian understanding of faith and practice ; it also becomes a source of renewal whereby all that influence life in its varied aspects are brought under the Lordship of Christ. The world is a fallen world and is therefore open to potent evil influences and as members of the Church we need to be involved in all aspects of the life of the world to help release forces that will result in the change of attitudes and practices through the impact of the Gospel.

Caste—Casteism—Communalism

Caste, casteism and communalism cannot be exclusively defined and the demarcation lines correctly determined. Originally, caste stood for a rigid regulation of human relations of the individual in group life which gave the economic and social structure a characteristic pattern. In that form it is changing. Casteism is the tendency among a group of people to utilize the strength of belonging together on the basis of birth for purposes exclusively limited to the interest of that particular group. It stands for the attitude towards caste or a persistent spirit which is influenced by the original caste moorings. As such it is a hindrance to the development of the national community. It is a living enemy to be fought in the contemporary situation. Communalism is a tendency to foster and develop the vested interests of a religious or cultural group at the expense of other groups. Both casteism and communalism stress the narrow group consciousness as against the loyalty to the larger group.

Persistence of Caste

In the context of several subtle expressions of caste in various manners and various spheres of action, it is difficult to give all the reasons for the persistence of caste within the Church. The following may be cited as some of the most vital reasons for the same :

(*i*) The Indian Christians are, to a large extent, still conditioned in their social life by certain traditional cultural patterns of thought and living which are contrary to Christian faith.

(*ii*) Within the Church, caste has persisted because of a failure to understand the social implications of the Christian claim that all are one in Christ and to act in the power of the

Spirit. The deep significance of this claim and its implications concerning the Church as the Body of Christ in which every member is integrally connected have not as yet been seriously faced by the Indian Christian. We cannot escape pointing out that the presence of caste in the Church is God's judgement on the unredeemed nature of man and also a failure in total commitment to the Lordship of Christ.

(*iii*) Many Christians have tended to cling to the advantages of caste, such as the security and protection it provides for the individual as well as for the preservation of moral codes involved in common group action. It must be, however, stated that even these advantages do not stand the test if considered in the light of the basic Christian assumption of human worth in the sight of God.

Koinonia *and Caste*.—Caste as a social unit is developed mainly on the basis of birth. But the characteristic of Christian *Koinonia* is that its life involves change or rebirth due to the active presence and transforming influence of the Holy Spirit. Seen in this light, caste is always to be viewed in terms of the new life in the Christian community and accordingly transcended. Further, caste is exclusive in whatever form or manner it may express itself, whereas Christian *Koinonia* stands for and witnesses to the message of a universal fellowship in which God is God of all and all are equal in His sight. This realisation would provide the dynamic for overcoming the exclusiveness of caste.

We may sum up by saying that *Koinonia* should never be considered merely as an alternative to caste, but rather as its corrective. In Christian *Koinonia* there is the presence of the life-giving Spirit of God which makes all things new. So *Koinonia* does not only seek to set things right, but to lift them to a higher plane of transformed being.

This does not mean that we should blind our eyes to the constant danger that is at hand in trying to think of *Koinonia* itself in such terms of exclusiveness so that it becomes nothing more than a communal entity. The Church should guard against this danger of "communalism".

A careful study of the history of Christianity in India would reveal that in spite of the tenacity with which caste has tended to cling to the Church, the Church has been by its very nature a potent force undermining caste. Wherever men and women of different caste groups have gathered together week

by week to worship Christ, to preach the Gospel and to hear it preached, and to partake of the Holy Communion, the Christian congregations have been given and have realised a community of the Spirit. In many areas of our land, the new community of the Gospel for the first time shook loose the deep-set foundations of a rigid caste structure and thus caused the first movement for social awakening and change. And we claim in all humility that the experience of this Christian Fellowship has inspired and continues to inspire Christians, even while they are involved in caste to make bold and sincere attempts to break down caste barriers.

Concrete Manifestations of Caste within the Church

(*i*) *Elections.*—It is a matter of deep regret that caste is being exploited for election purposes. What would otherwise be in the background is thereby given undue prominence. This should stab awaken Christian conscience to persistent effort in the fight against this new aspect of caste manifestation in our contemporary life.

(*ii*) *Selection and Transfer of Pastors.*—When ministers are called to parish work or when they are transferred or when candidates are chosen to the ministry, caste considerations are taken into account. This may perhaps be done in the name and for the sake of securing harmony and justice, but should caste be the determining factor for securing them ?

(*iii*) *Use of Church Building.*—Although in the last generation separate Churches for different castes in the same locality were not uncommon, today it is generally accepted that this is contrary to Christ. Where this practice continues unchanged, immediate action needs to be taken.

(*iv*) *Appointments and Admissions.*—Frequently heads of institutions or influential elements in their administration are swayed by caste and caste considerations in their decisions.

(*v*) *Caste Associations.*—In certain areas, both laymen and clergy are encouraging associations which intend to gather people of one caste and have a programme of activities of their own for purposes of mutual aid which tend to become exclusive. This should be strictly prohibited by the Church.

(*vi*) *Marriage and Family Life.*—In the matter of selecting partners for young men and women, caste consideration has a powerful hold in many Christian homes, perhaps, due largely to

the attitude of parents or grandparents. In some Christian homes, with regard to matters such as employment of servants, mixing together of children of different families, caste prejudices are allowed to play a dominant role. Further, in certain Christian homes, at the times of christening, betrothal, marriage, etc., caste discriminations are made. Such occasions, on the other hand, may be effectively used as opportunities for the demonstration of Christian fellowship which transcends caste.

The Church in the past has sought to provide spiritual home to those who "lost caste" for the sake of their Christian religious convictions. Today in our opinion, there is need for the Church to declare clearly that members of the Church who make personal and social decisions which cut across caste boundaries will have the special supporting fellowship of the Church. In fact, practical demonstration of the Church's support to Christian people who face social isolation through inter-caste marriages or other decisions affecting caste exclusiveness is very urgently needed today.

(*vii*) *Use of Caste Names and Titles.*—There is a general tendency to give up caste titles. But where instances still persist of such practice, Christians should be urged to give them up.

The Church is committed to fight evil in this world in whatever form and wherever it is found. In this mission we will be involved to the end of time and the final triumph of God's righteousness over the principalities and powers of this world. We may not therefore in any generation rest in self-righteousness and self-complacency, for so long as wrong continues to be manifest in life we too are involved in it. We should continue to devise new ways and means of fighting evils in the assured hope that the Lord of the Church will lead the Church to gain victories through His power and thereby fulfil the sacred promise He has given to His Church in our land.

THE SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC TRENDS IN THE ANDHRA CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

(A Study Document)

[NOTE.—*An Andhra Christian Consultation met in Guntur to "survey the problems facing the Christian community in Andhra Pradesh and define the main issues and a Christian approach to them in the light of the Christian understanding of State and society". The Consultation consisted of about 30 Christian people including teachers, theologians, pastors and other Church leaders from different parts and Churches of Andhra Pradesh. Their deliberations were exploratory in character and were intended as the first step in a process of study. Therefore, the statements of the Group given below should be regarded as no more than initiating a process of study and research, that is, as a study document.*

The Consultation met under the auspices of the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, the Ecumenical Study Commission of the National Christian Council and the Andhra Christian College and were convened by Dr. P. D. Devanandan, Mr. K. Jacob and Principal T. S. Paulus.]

I. THE SOCIAL SITUATION OF ANDHRA CHRISTIANS

INTRODUCTION

THE Andhra Christian community including both Roman Catholics and Protestants, numbers roughly two-and-a-half million. Numerically, it is a minority group in a State with a population of thirty-three million. It is the single community in Andhra Pradesh in which there are people of almost all caste origins. Its membership consists of converts drawn largely from the outcastes labelled as untouchables and in relatively small numbers from the other castes. Although untouchability as such is now legally prohibited, rural Christians are still treated as untouchables and share the depressed social position of other members of the Scheduled Castes. Urban Christians are still often discriminated against, but to a lesser degree.

The nation as a whole is in a state of transition. The impact of science, the spread of liberal education fostering democratic ideals, and the implementation of welfare plans have all released forces which challenge the people's customs and their traditional modes of thought. This is going to be a period of anxiety and concern, for people do not readily break with the old, nor do they boldly accept the new. Some have broken with old social patterns but have not yet accepted or developed many new ones. A careful study needs to be made of social factors which should be preserved and those which should be eliminated in Indian society, and of those factors which should be incorporated in the life of the Christian community.

We appreciate the difficulties with which the Government is faced in working out the ideal of the socialistic pattern of society, and we are aware of the limitations of the Christian community in participating in the life of the wider community. Pledging our readiness to co-operate with the efforts of the Government, we make the following observations and recommendations :

1. The Menace of Caste in the Christian Community

The Problem.—Caste feeling within the Christian community has been somewhat overcome by the small minority of urban Christians but within the rural Christian community, caste feelings are strong between Malas and Madigas, and between both these groups of Harijan Christians and Christians with a higher caste background. We recognize that the following are some of the factors which foster the spirit of caste in the Christian community :

(*i*) the existence of caste from time immemorial as a hierarchical institution in India, and its adverse influence on reformist movements, both Christian and non-Christian ;

(*ii*) the wooing of Christians belonging to different caste groups by rival castes and sometimes by rival political parties in the village ;

(*iii*) the unhappy phenomenon of some educated Christians who make use of caste for purposes of election, instead of condemning it ; and

(*iv*) denominational differences, which have reinforced caste distinctions in places where two or more denominations are present in the same village, Malas belonging predominantly

to one denomination and Madigas to another. This situation is largely the result of overlapping Mission work in the areas where Mission comity lines have not been sharply drawn.

The following *remedies* to this problem are suggested :

(1) regular Christian teaching about the sin of caste feelings within the Christian community, and a spiritual revival which will give the Christians the power they need to overcome these caste feelings ;

(2) bringing all Christians in a village into *one* congregation worshipping together in *one* place, if they are of the same denomination ;

(3) where a single congregation is not possible, because there are Churches of different denominations ;

(*a*) the joining together of Christians in all activities which denominational differences do not forbid ; and

(*b*) discussion by the denominations concerned of the theological differences which are a barrier to full Christian fellowship ;

(4) increasing active participation in the programmes of the wider village community ;

(5) improvement of cleanliness in the habits and surroundings of the village Christian community ;

(6) the implementation of the generally accepted principle that in all schools, pupils of all castes should be welcomed ; and

(7) encouraging inter-caste marriages.

2. Man-Woman Relationships in Family and Society

The Ideal of the Christian Family.—The emphasis upon equality of partners in marriage and new relationship between parents and children is something that is slowly permeating Christian homes and influences non-Christian society. The pace needs to be made more rapid.

Women in the Christian Community.—The village congregation with men and women worshipping together stands as a witness to the ideal of the equality of men and women before the throne of God. The implications of this, of course, will have to be worked out at the social level. Christian women have thrown themselves into the social service activities such as

nursing and teaching. However, the community should have a concern for the highly educated women who are compelled by circumstances to remain unmarried. It will be helpful to remove false notions among the educated men that an educated wife is expensive and will not co-operate with the husband. Conversely, the highly educated women should be helped to get rid of the feeling that the husband should be one of superior education.

3. The Christian Community and the Welfare Schemes

Helpful programmes are being executed by the Government for the advancement of the people. There is no adequate agency to disseminate information and make the people aware of the opportunities available. The Christian community should think of an agency to meet this need. Further, it is recommended to the Churches to think in terms of promoting service to the villagers through rural clinics and social work which are new avenues.

The facilities available under the schemes—whether it is the opening of a school, a library, a playground, or a maternity centre—should be located in places which are accessible to all castes in general and Harijans in particular. We emphasise that the personnel recruited under the schemes should be people who have real sympathy with the Scheduled Castes and backward classes and are zealous about their work. It would be helpful if a fair number of men and women are recruited from these communities to be part of the team working in a development area.

The Christian community should take more advantage of the programmes of social amelioration provided by the State. While on the one hand we expect the Government to provide more opportunities we lack, we should at the same time lay emphasis upon the proper use of what is provided. The national context requires that a community to survive and advance should not be aloof but should throw itself heart and soul into the stream of national life.

We need to emphasize that our faith, though distinctive, enjoins us to work together with all people for all the worthy ends of society at large. We encourage Christians to participate in social and other village activities without compromising Christian principles. To give guidance here, we recommend the resumption of the studies on Social Customs by the Andhra Christian Council.

All social evils like drink, illiteracy and usury must be combated, both by the entire society and by the Christian Church, through both systematic teaching and exercise of Church discipline.

4. Contribution of the Christian Community to Social Development

With all its limitations, the community has made a notable contribution to the life and work of the wider community in the State. It has the benefit of instruction in morals which would help the growth of a democratic community. It is endowed with good leaders, who are silently engaged in the programmes of reconstruction of the Indian society although they may not be seen on the political platform. The number of non-Christian people benefited by the network of Christian institutions, educational, medical, etc., is very large. Such benefits have been extended in response to the Gospel of Jesus without distinction of caste, creed or sex.

Church and New Social Traditions.—At this time of social changes, both planned and unplanned, the traditional social controls of joint-family and caste are necessarily weakening. And, consequently, men and women tend to lose the sense of security, responsiveness and direction which the old society provided. And very often they feel lost. It is the duty and opportunity of the Church in this situation to provide discipline and controls on the new spiritual basis of Christian worship and Christian values. In the rural congregation and even more in the urban congregation, the Christian community should develop that strong feeling of oneness that gives the individual a sense of security and makes him sensitive in his daily behaviour to the approval and disapproval of the Christian congregation. By so encouraging the development of group disciplines which can become adequate alternatives to traditional controls, the Church can best help the nation in the building of new social traditions suitable to a political democracy and a more egalitarian society.

II. THE POLITICAL SITUATION OF ANDHRA CHRISTIANS

1. The Responsibility of Christians in the Field of Politics

To Christians, the State is God's instrument to maintain and promote peace, justice and freedom among men. We believe that all power is ordained of God who has commanded that

man should love his neighbour as himself. Therefore, the Christian owes a moral obligation to participate in the life of the State with the motive of service to man as man. In the light of the dignity and sacredness of human personality, the State must be seen as made for man and it must recognise the rights and welfare of the human person as its purpose. Therefore we support democracy as better than other forms of Government.

As the State today is the main agent and instrument of social change, we are interested in seeing that the change should work in the direction of welfare and progress. In a democratic country like ours, it is the right and duty of individuals as well as groups and organisations to participate in the political life of the country in order to secure not only their rights but also the rights of all sections suffering from social disabilities.

Andhra Christians of whom a large percentage are of Harijan origin are equally subject to the social, economic and political disabilities as Harijans. People of the Harijan background in the Andhra Pradesh is about 25 to 30 per cent of the total population. Therefore it is their concern to enter politics with a view to securing their own social emancipation and that of all sections of society which are subject to similar disabilities without which the nation can never progress towards a Welfare State.

2. Political Disabilities of Harijans—Christian and Non-Christian

(*a*) The political disabilities of Harijans, Christian and non-Christian, are primarily due to their social and economic condition determined by the caste structure. From times immemorial the Harijans have been treated as outcaste and untouchables. They have had no place in the life of society.

(*b*) On account of their own social backwardness and poverty and the caste bias of the upper classes, the backward Christian has little chance of securing nomination to candidature by political parties and even if he succeeds in getting nomination he has no ghost of a chance of winning. This is proved by the fact that since the inception of the Republican Constitution, not a single backward Christian of this area has been elected to the Legislative Assembly nor to the Indian Parliament. Thus he is today a political outcaste.

(*c*) Even in the exercise of his vote, the Harijan, Christian or non-Christian, is entirely under the pressure of his caste

overlord. Thus the ignorance and poverty of the lower classes in Andhra Pradesh are being exploited by caste-dominated political parties.

(*d*) The internal differences of Christians based on caste and denominational considerations are another source of weakness. The differentiation between Harijans and Harijan Christians is an added handicap to the unity of the people of the Harijan background and opposed to the concept of Secular State.

(*e*) Owing to the lack of political representation and other opportunities, Andhra Christians have not been able to take advantage of the legal provisions such as the anti-untouchability laws and welfare measures for social development such as Community Projects. Thus even political opportunities of democracy instead of working as an instrument for the emancipation of the depressed people have assumed the character of oppressive forces because they have virtually become the monopoly of the upper castes.

3. Political Parties in Andhra Pradesh

1. *The Congress: Its Programme and Appeal.*—(a) With the abolition of separate electorates, the Congress assumed responsibility for the care of the minorities and it has implemented the pledge to some extent in States like Madras and Mysore.

(*b*) The Congress is committed to the ideals of secularism, democracy and socialism. It has recognised universal adult franchise, fundamental rights and religious freedom; it has made untouchability illegal. These have aroused a new consciousness among the backward people of their rights for equality with other groups.

(*c*) It has recognised freedom of private enterprise in the fields of education and social services. It has also given special opportunities of education to backward classes such as Harijans and Harijan Christians.

(*d*) It is to be stated to the credit of the Congress that at least one section of the Harijan community, *viz.*, Hindu Harijans are receiving the benefits of measures specially designed for their uplift including special reservation of seats in legislatures, reservation of seats in professional colleges and in public services.

(*e*) In the land legislation of some States, the tillers of the soil from backward classes have secured new rights which

they did not enjoy previously and which have enhanced their social dignity. The Congress is contemplating land reforms with fixation of ceilings and has abolished the Zamindari system.

(*f*) The Congress is led by outstanding men like Pandit Nehru who command public confidence.

Its drawbacks :—(*a*) So far the Congress in Andhra Pradesh has not been able to make it possible for the backward people to receive the fullest benefits of the development programmes of the Congress, for example, Community Projects, because of vested interests of groups and castes.

(*b*) Both in the organisation and administration, corruption and nepotism are rampant and are paralysing the good intentions and actions of the Congress, though measures to eradicate these evils are definitely there.

(*c*) The failure of the Andhra Congress Government to give adequate representation to Andhra Christians in Legislatures and other bodies is a matter for extreme regret and early remedy. For instance, it is strange that there is not a single Harijan Christian member in the Andhra Legislative Assembly of 301 members ; there is no Christian in the Andhra Social Welfare Board which consists of 30 members, in spite of the established tradition of the Christians in the field of social service. They have not so far done anything to improve the condition of agricultural labourers in the villages. There is a prevailing feeling among Andhra Christians that the pledge given by the Congress in the Constituent Assembly and outside for the protection of the rights of minorities is not being fulfilled.

2. *Communist Party* : *Its Programme and Appeal.*—(*a*) They assure that they would implement the ideals and policies of the Congress in a much more effective manner than the Congress.

(*b*) They say they will abolish caste discrimination and establish a classless society without distinction of caste and creed.

(*c*) That they will liquidate the present system of land ownership and redistribute it in such a manner that everybody has land including the present landless people.

(*d*) They promise higher wages and security of employment.

(*e*) They say they would eradicate corruption.

(*f*) In Andhra Pradesh, Communist leaders who belong to upper castes have made unprecedented political history by fraternising with the people of the lower classes. They have thus caught the imagination of the masses.

(*g*) They work among the lower classes with a zeal which is not so evident among Congress people.

Drawbacks :—(*a*) Communist philosophy is fundamentally based on atheism and materialism, and so unacceptable to Christians.

(*b*) In politics, they are totalitarian and anti-democratic.

(*c*) There is evidence of corruption on party level.

(*d*) In spite of all their professions, in the entire Andhra Pradesh in the elections of 1952 and 1955 they set up only upper caste Hindus with the exception of two.

It should be noted that 1952 and 1955 elections show a remarkable contrast in the reaction of the people to Communist propaganda. In 1952 many Christians voted for Communists and in 1955 there was a change in their attitude.

3. *The Socialist Parties.*—The Andhra Socialist Party and other democratic Socialist Parties in Andhra Pradesh are too weak at present to be effective political alternatives as instruments of stable government and social change. But it is a dangerous situation to have totalitarian Communism as the only alternative in the field to those who get discontented with the Congress. Therefore, the prospect and possibility of one of the Socialist Parties eventually becoming strong to channel the political and social concern of those who are discontent with the ruling party and who cannot by conviction support an atheistic and anti-democratic party cannot be ruled out. Any evaluation of democratic socialist parties in Andhra Pradesh by this Consultation at present is however premature.

4. The Machinery for Expressing Christian Concern

The Christians from the Harijan background as well as non-Christian Harijans need change in the structure of society so that they may get release from oppressive conditions of social indignity and economic poverty. As the enlightened section of people of this background, it is the duty of the Christian

community to take a lead in the necessary social action to seek to remove the specific disabilities of the people of the Harijan background in Andhra Pradesh. In a democratic Welfare State, social and economic changes and welfare activities are closely connected with politics, so that any social action is also involved in political action. Herein lies the necessity of politics.

There is need for educating the people of the Harijan background how to use their votes effectively to further social change, and also how to use their numerical strength and social awakening for a continued organised mass movement not only for the realisation of their economic and social rights in relation to others but also to fight against reactionary social attitudes and practices among themselves.

For these purposes, we suggest the formation of a Christian Organisation for Political Education and Social Action as a mass organisation of Andhra Christians with the emancipation of all people of Harijan background in Andhra Pradesh as its aim. It will have its own independent specific programme of uplift of Harijans, but will co-operate with other organisations for the realisation of its goals. It will always contain people of different political persuasions, but it may also relate itself to one or more of the political parties in the State as the Organisation may decide from time to time for particular issues in pursuance of the furtherance of its interests and aims. However, this should by no means mean a denial of its independence for agitation against any party or government on specific issues. In other words, the organisation which we envisage will be a broad democratic, social and political front of the Andhra Christian community but with aims which transcend the purely communal interests of the community. It will be helpful for such an organisation to have an official organ. The organisation will have a constructive programme of activities to achieve the aim of bettering the economic, political and social conditions of the people.

In the light of the weaknesses of Christian organisations of a similar nature in the past, we would urge : (1) that there be a team of full-time workers with a sense of vocation for mass contact, and (2) that the organisation be rooted in the villages and supported entirely from the beginning by the contributions of large numbers of the community.

(*a*) *The Role of the Church.*—While it should be the concern of the Church to interest itself in the political well-being

of the people, the Church as Church ought not be directly involved in party-politics. In its preaching and teaching, it should give prominence to the moral and spiritual basis for the social and political responsibilities of Christians as citizens. It should play a more effective role in educating the people in the social implications of the Christian Gospel.

(*b*) We are convinced about the need for a continued programme of intensive study of the social, political and economic problems of the Andhra Christian community.

III. THE ECONOMIC SITUATION OF ANDHRA CHRISTIANS

Introduction

The members of the Andhra Christian community have been struggling under conditions of abject poverty largely identical with those of the Scheduled Castes from which they are mostly drawn.

This community is essentially landless, chiefly dependent on agricultural labour in villages, with low and irregular income, and a deplorable standard of living. Although a small section has migrated to urban areas offering industrial employment and a few others have been able to secure employment in the Church, and in the State and other services, a large majority still lives under conditions of economic insecurity, want and frustration. This situation is considerably aggravated by political and social disabilities.

Trends.—While progress in the country as a whole since independence has been considerable, in the case of the Christian community in Andhra Pradesh, it is negligible. In this context, the following trends are observed :

(1) There was a time when most of the educated Christians looked to the Churches for employment, but now they are compelled to seek it elsewhere.

(2) There is an increase in the desire for land ownership both among the educated and uneducated for economic security and means of livelihood.

(3) There is a tendency in many quarters to give up traditional occupations and neglect traditional skills, due either to severe competition or false sense of values, or lack of capital or all of these.

(4) There is a tendency to competitive living incompatible with their economic resources.

(5) The increasing desire on the part of the parents to give their children higher education, leads often to impoverishment of the family and unemployment.

(6) There is prevalent a strong feeling of dissatisfaction among the members of the community that the same opportunities given to the Harijan brother of the Hindu fold are not given to them.

As a result of these, there is a deep sense of frustration, particularly among the educated youth of the community leading to the breakdown of his spirit.

Suggestions.—The situation as revealed by these trends, found in the community while deplorable, needs to be remedied, and the following measures are suggested :

1. It is necessary to secure adequate information and data. Therefore, it is imperative to undertake a thorough scientific and on-the-spot survey and study on every aspect of the economic problems of the Christian community.

2. Land is a definite source of economic security, and the members of the Christian community are capable of efficient cultivation, and proper care of land. Since the bulk of the community is only agricultural labourers tenancy reforms will not bring them any land. It is the responsibility of the Government to provide land for the landless. The *Bhoodan* Movement has not yet provided any land to the landless in Andhra Pradesh. The possibilities of securing land under co-operative farming are worth exploring.

Efforts should be made to prevent eviction of people from the land which they had occupied and cultivated and which is now being granted to political sufferers.

In view of the fact that Mission and Church properties, which are lying idle are being sold away, we suggest that the Missions and Churches explore the possibilities of putting them to productive uses.

For the benefit of those who possess land, wide publicity may be given in regard to the improved methods of cultivation and availability of sources of cheap credit, implements and seeds for agricultural purposes.

For the continuous study and dissemination of information there is need for an official organ.

3. Leather work, weaving and carpentry have great possibilities for development, and should therefore be given priority in schemes for experimentation, which would also help solve the problem, to some extent, of rural unemployment. As spare-time employment, some other cottage industries like lace, basket and tape-making should also be developed. The marketing possibilities for goods so produced should be worked out by co-operatives. Here also, the need for a scientific study of the problem is emphasized.

4. Christian community in the past has been a pioneer in the field of medicine and education. It is now prudent on our part to seek new avenues of expansion and consolidation as a community and the field of encouraging the spread of the knowledge of technical skills is open to us.

A polytechnic may, therefore, be started on the lines of the C.S.I. plans for the same in South India. Funds could be secured for this project both from our own Government and foreign Foundations. This is extremely urgent.

It would be necessary to undertake the survey of existing technical and industrial centres under the Churches, in order to encourage their expansion for greater production and employment.

For advanced technical training, more Christian young men may be sent abroad, particularly when a large number of facilities are available.

5. As a measure to increase educated employment, it is important to devise means to counsel the students and parents on the selection of subjcts for specialisation and provide vocational guidance at the High School level wherever possible.

An employment bureau may be brought into existence to help secure jobs for young men.

6. Efforts must be made to secure for the community the benefits of the provision of housing, small-scale and cottage industries, credit for agricultural and non-agricultural purposes, co-operative machinery, the N.E.S., Development Blocks, Community Development, etc.

Information on all these possibilities needs to be collected and supplied from time to time through some proper agency.

7. Domestic economy should be based on the Christian principles of honest earning and stewardship. In this connection, the act of Christian giving is also urged.

Social customs among Christians involving wasteful expenditure should be discouraged. New trends in the direction of compulsory dowry system in certain parts are also springing up ; these should be strongly discountenanced.

8. The policy of the Government in not giving scholarships to Harijan Christians as they do to Harijans, is a serious economic handicap which should be rectified urgently by every legitimate means.

9. Family planning is recognized by some as a measure of improving the economic condition of the family.

IV. FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES FOR FURTHER STUDY

As the purpose of the Consultation is to initiate, and not to conclude, a study of the general political, economic and social situation of the Andhra Christian community from a Christian point of view, it will be to our advantage to give more thought to the following fundamental issues raised in our discussions regarding the approach we have adopted in our Findings.

1. The general spirit of the Findings is championing the under-privileged. That is a Christian ideal indeed. The Harijan-Christians of our community are the under-privileged and our endeavour to uplift them is praiseworthy. But our enthusiasm to advocate the cause of the Harijan Christian is creating in its wake a serious problem. Should the Church of God be divided between the Harijan Christian and the Caste Christian ? Should the Church ever recognise caste within itself ? Should our attempts at promoting the political, social and economic condition of the Harijan Christian be at the risk of weakening the oneness of the Body of Christ ? Is such a position theologically tenable ? Will it not be a hindrance to evangelism ?

2. As Christians we have a responsibility to State and society. In this great formative period of our national character, which is the ethical position the Church must take in helping the nation ? It is agreed that we do not advocate religious communalism. But should we advocate caste-communalism ? A recognition of such a caste-consciousness is present in the Constitution in the special consideration for the Scheduled Castes, although only for a limited period of time. But by seeking

to emancipate the Harijan-Christian and the Harijan-Hindu through an increase of their caste-consciousness, are we not unwillingly fostering caste-communalism ? However noble the motives be, if by implementing them, we perpetuate the communalistic divisions of our society, can it be ethical on our part when the nation is searching for a casteless pattern of society ? On the other hand, will not our contribution to the nation be more ethical if through economic, social and political programmes of Christian action we help create a new pattern of community life where communalistic considerations give place to national solidarity and progress ?

3. The general tone of the Findings is in the interest of the backward communities and particularly the Harijan community. This we maintain is our responsibility. We have our obligations to all those who stand in need of help. Christian generosity seeks not the self but others and it is in this spirit the entire Christian action is visualized. But does not the preponderance in our statements of the interests of the Harijan Christian community undermine the logic of our argument ? The general position is broadbased and includes all peoples of the Harijan background, but the specific issues concern the Harijan Christian community. Does not this bring in religious communalism indirectly and make our concern for the Harijan-Hindu a little unreal ?

In view of the significant conclusions involved and implied in these considerations, we recommend a more serious study of the approach to the disabilities of the Andhra Christian community.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Twice-Born. By G. Morris Carstairs. (The Hogarth Press, London), 1957.

With the subtitle "A Study of a Community of High-Caste Hindus", this book is a social anthropological study of the Rajput, Brahmin and Bania communities in a village of Rajasthan by a highly trained investigator who is also a practising psychiatrist. It is an excellent study. This review will attempt to lift up from it only those few points which seem particularly relevant as background for a discussion on "Caste and Its Alternatives".

As Margaret Mead writes in her preface, this "is a study of the differences in character which characterise three Indian castes, in a remote and only recently modernised community.... We are given a picture of the way in which caste position in India expands the imagination and limits the possibilities of the members of each independent caste".

In the village studied, social change really only got well under way in 1948 when the Congress Government started to introduce democratic reforms into a thoroughly caste-structured and feudal society. The change of power from the Ruler to the Congress and the concurrent upsetting of the social hierarchy, in which the inhabitants of the palace and their friends had been at the top, left most of the villagers somewhat confused and unsure of their changed position in the emerging social structure. However, in this confused period of change, only the older members of the upper castes strictly held to the old conventions requiring special respect for the Ruler and his associates. By and large the members of the lower castes threw over these old conventions at once even though this left them somewhat unsure of themselves in the social system still in the process of formation (p. 24).

No doubt, there had long been social mobility by groups (rarely by individuals) who sought to better themselves socially by becoming more respectable. Now, however, along with political change has also come economic change. As a result many young people can no longer obtain subsistence in their hereditary caste-occupations. Their becoming "bus drivers or mechanics, shop assistants or Government servants" thus is both a symptom and a cause of social change. But, Carstairs points out that this also means additional uncertainty, confusion, and insecurity for these young men who no longer have the moral support of fulfilling a familiar, time-honoured caste role, which carried with it a satisfying certainty of one's own social role, and that of one's neighbours (p. 58).

In spite of the fact of social change it seems clear from this study that caste structuring of society in many villages is far from "dead" and that it is really not changing very rapidly at all—in

spite of the rather wishful thinking often done about this change by "urbanised" intellectuals.

Carstairs finds that the traditional pattern of caste interrelationships is the most stable feature of village social life. The caste system was assumed as background by all his informants in their references to personal intercourse. Caste roles, both one's own and those of others, both social superiors and menials, were taken for granted (p. 57).

The psychological predicament in which caste Hindus find themselves in the face of changing social conditions is often not fully appreciated by commentators not of their fold. This study documents the depth to which the idea of invisible pollution, a basic social sanction in caste, is ingrained in the child from his very earliest years to the point where "his repugnance for a low-caste person's touch become as involuntary as his disgust for the smell and touch of fæces" (p. 67 ; also p. 228). All of his caste Hindu informants told Dr. Carstairs of the internal distress they felt (at least initially) at even the idea of having to sit and eat or drink with members of the lowest "untouchable" castes. Invariably the most personal meaning of caste to his informants was closely related to ideas of bodily purity and defilement.

It has been claimed by some scholars that there is really no necessary connection between higher Hinduism and caste. This may be true both logically and theologically. However, this study makes it extremely clear that in the minds and emotions of persons participating in the caste structure there is in fact an undeniable connection between caste and religion and that the latter is in some real sense a primary basis of the former. In contemporary village society caste follows from religion with at least psychological necessity.

For Carstairs' informants "the caste into which one was born was determined by the accumulated sins and virtues shown in one's previous existence, that was one's *karma* ; and one of the aspects of Hindu *dharma* (right behaviour) consisted in the acceptance of one's lot, and the observance both of the restrictions and the prerogatives peculiar to one's caste" (p. 57). In a slightly different approach he found that in the process of growing up, each villager "came to acquire the fundamentals of Hindu belief. which are epitomised in the concepts of *karma, dharma* and *moksha.* They knew without question that their life was only one of a long series of rebirths, that they must conform to right behaviour in order to advance their spiritual progress towards the desired end of Release ; and they knew that the hierarchy of castes and the gradations of sub-human life are a reflection of the soul's progress in working out its *karma*" (p. 145).

In terms of practical religion there is an ideal way out of the caste structure, *via* the way of renunciation by becoming a *sannyasi.* But this way is so irrelevant to men involved in the world that they must shun the taking of food with a *sannyasi*, even though

he be the highest of ex-Brahmins, because his service to untouchables will have made him polluting in terms of daily pious observance even though his service contributes to his assurance of *moksha* upon death.

A correlation between types of religious observance and caste position is observed. Most castes had temples which were pretty much their own and which served as caste meeting places. The higher castes, with which this study is primarily concerned, tended to be rather more sophisticated religiously than their fellow villagers. They tended to conform more to the classical patterns of "higher Hinduism" and to scorn the petty gods of "popular Hinduism" which the others followed. The high-caste Hindus seldom participated in the more emotional forms of worship such as the cult of *bhajan*-singing even though this was considered as a perfectly respectable way of devotion (p. 94). Most of the extremely emotional sects, many of which coupled sexual ecstasy with their way of devotion, were self-limiting to a low-caste and/or outcaste membership. Sociologically this composition of sectarian movements is not remarkable. It does, however, suggest that the real religion of the lower caste villagers may not offer so much support to the caste structure as does the religion of the high-caste villagers.

In practice Carstairs devotes more attention to describing the typical character of high-caste Hindus than he does to any attempt to describe typical character differences between his three castes—although he does make this effort too. But, the fact that character types may well be caste-linked suggests that we might expect different typical reactions to social change from different castes. It is possible that the types of M. N. Srinivas, "westernization" and "sanskritization" are caste-linked in this way.

Historically the religious inevitability of one's caste position has been reinforced by the social and psychical inevitability of having to remain in exactly the position into which one was born. Now, Carstairs points out, the "mere possibility of being able to 'make good' in the big cities" (p. 147) is destroying these latter inevitabilities. But the loss of these inevitabilities so far seems to involve the loss of many kinds of social and psychical securities which were of great value.

R. W. T.

India's Changing Villages. By S. C. Dube. (Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., London), 1958.

The subtitle of this book by one of India's ablest younger anthropologists is "Human Factors in Community Development". It is the report on a research project conducted in a Community Development Block in Western U.P. under the auspices of the India Programme of Cornell University. Primary attention is given to two different villages in the Block, which were rather intensively studied. The work contains some very suggestive insights. It seems a pity that the research project could not have continued through

a longer period. It terminated long before the planned Development period was completed and hence fails to treat some rather vital factors such as the remaining effect of the Development project after its brief intensive period. This review will deal only with the aspects of the study which seem to throw light on the topic "Caste and Its Alternatives".

Dr. Dube contends that caste is probably the most important single organizing principle in these villages—in terms of keeping groups permanently apart while at the same time keeping them together through well-defined mutual expectations (p. 26 f.). No doubt various reform movements have led to modifications of the caste institution, particularly with regard to the more inhumane aspects of untouchability. But by and large, only the modes through which the hierarchical structure and the social distance are expressed have changed. Often this change is quite obvious in the "market place" but much less so in the "home". It is not unusual to hear of two groups in a village—the "traditionally minded" and "the progressives" (who correspond to the "new men" in the study by Carstairs).

One of the most important of these new modes of inter-caste differentiation is that of politics—which became a possibility at the village level only after independence ; that is at exactly the time that some of the modes of untouchability began to be thoroughly discouraged, as were also the modes of caste-structured patterns of "landlordism" including traditional "patron-client" relationships shortly thereafter. Most election compaigns in this area, even for higher offices outside the village, were fought at least in part on the basis of inter-caste rivalry. Often this has led to the political grouping together of several castes in an effort to break the traditional domination of one particular group. Almost invariably this has meant that previously suppressed conflicts are brought out into the open in the overt struggle for power and authority. From the mental health point of view this new emotional openness of the conflict can probably be seen as a positive development. Usually in Dube's villages the political contests were between castes which had exercised power for a long time and the under-privileged castes. Sometimes major realignments took place, with the historically dominant group maintaining power only by admitting additional groups into a newly expanded ruling group.

It will be noticed that the above description implies the relative political inactivity of what might be called the "middle-class castes". Dube makes two different sets of types of status-differentiation between groups of castes—one three-fold and the other four-fold. In spite of this inconsistency he makes quite clear the fact that it is also the "middle-class castes" who are most neglected by the Community Development Project—and perhaps by all Government welfare schemes. The C.D. Project defers to the wishes of the political and economic elite of the village, it tends to be of great help to the landowning class by increasing their profits through agricultural extension methods, and it devotes much effort

to the "uplift" of the exterior castes, while doing little or nothing for the "middle class castes". Dube shows that the personnel and aims of the C.D. Project were much less well known among the "middle-class castes" whose members are mostly artisans and occupational labourers (*i.e.* non-menial labourers) than among either the higher status groups or the lower status groups.

There was a feeling on the part of all other groups that the C.D. scheme actually resulted merely in the "rich getting richer" and that the policy of consultation with the elite made the C.D.P a subtle way of maintaining the *status quo* (pp. 130, 138, 149, 179). Actually Dube found that in practice during *shramdan* under the Project the elite and landowning castes tended to be the organizers and directors while the traditional labouring castes did all the hard labour. Many of these labourers found it difficult to distinguish between this system and the older, resented, systems of imposed labour for the landlord-*cum*-elite group (p. 135).

Another point which Dube makes about the implicit discrimination against the lower-caste and exterior-caste groups is that many "welfare" projects, including C.D.P., do in fact lead to a certain amount of technological unemployment among the lower castes and a great deal of fear of it among them. For example, his study showed that "an iron cultivator is believed to do the work of four labourers, and a tractor replaces eight to ten people. Even the use of a simple mechanical device like the chaff-cutter has taken away part of their livelihood from the Chamar community" (p. 148). He also notes that many members of the upper-castes are glad for this development because from their point of view this means that they need not be so dependent on the lower-caste people and hence, now-a-days, not so subject to any pressures arising from them.

Dube makes it quite clear that two extreme status-political groups are found in his village. One of them hopes that the present Government will interpret and implement the Gandhian concept of *Rama-raj* as including the revival of the ancient social order including the recognition and enforcement of the classical relative statuses of different castes. The other, including the politically conscious leaders of the lower-castes, assumes that the Government should and will take steps to eradicate the barriers between castes and between the rich and the poor.

It even becomes clear (pp. 143, 145) that although the higher castes want to have their children become highly educated both in order to be able to cope with changing conditions in the world and in order to maintain their superiority over the lower castes some of the members of the higher castes are fearful lest the education, which is so easily available to lower-caste children as well, lead to the lower-castes breaking away from tradition and hence to a disintegration of the traditional social organisation.

But the field of education is only one area, of many, in which the caste structure tends against social change—particularly from the

view-point of the upper-castes, who probably have most to lose and least to gain from any such change. A petty but vital example is found in the C.D.P. advocacy of the proper care of manure through the use of pits so that the nitrogen will not escape from it before use. In these villages the higher caste farmers could not follow such advanced practice because their caste standards would not permit their women to carry dung to so great a distance from their homes as areas outside the village where the pits had to be (nor, of course, can men do this "women's work"). So too, any major violation of ritual-pollution standards by C.D. workers is viewed askance by the upper-caste villagers nor would very low-caste C.D. workers find acceptance among the village elite. This is not to say that the village elite is an entirely closed group. Low-caste leaders may be admitted to the group on the basis of their new political power and authority but they are not exactly welcomed and considerable initial resistance to their admission was observed. Their acceptance seems to be largely political rather than social.

Dube makes an interesting observation about the status of caste in the Muslim community in these villages. Caste exists, no doubt, and traditional rules govern intermarriage and commensality between the various Muslim castes. However, "beliefs and observances regarding ritual purity and pollution that largely govern inter-caste relations in Hindu society, are not found in the Muslim group" (p. 57).

R. W. T.

Appendices

TWO CONSULTATIONS

I. On Caste and Its Alternatives

A Christian Consultation on *Caste and Its Alternatives* was held in the American College, Madura, from September 21 to 25, 1958. Among participants (see list below), there was a good mixture of village pastors, students of theology and sociology and teachers in Christian colleges. The Consultation was organised by the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society and the National Christian Council of India with the help of Principal Savarirayan as well as Shri Arthur J. Harris and other younger members of the staff of the American College.

Preparatory Reading.—The following papers were circulated for preparatory reading :

1. *Caste, Society, Church.* By P. Chenchiah, Madras.
2. *Caste and Economic Development in India.* By John Healey, Tambaram.
   Some Comments. By E. T. Mathew, Trivandrum.
3. *Caste in India—A Psychological Approach.* By Professor S. P. Adinarayan, Annamalainagar.
4. *Church and Caste.* By Principal D. Rajarigam, Tranquebar.
5. *Caste in Transition.* By A. P. Barnabas, Allahabad.
6. *Caste, Church and Christian Responsibility.* By Alexander D. John, Bangalore.
7. *Some Statements on Caste and Its Alternatives.* Quotations from earlier publications of CISRS.
8. Reviews by R. W. Taylor of J. H. Hutton : *Caste in India.*
   G. Morris Carstairs : *The Twice-Born.*
   S. C. Dube : *India's Changing Villages.*

Programme.—Dr. P. D. Devanandan chaired the Consultation. For the first two days the Consultation met in plenary to listen to and discuss the following papers :

1. *Caste, the Christian and the Nation in India Today.* By Dr. P. D. Devanandan.
2. *Powerlessness of National Idealism before the Power of Caste and Casteism* :
   (*a*) "A Sociological Diagnosis." By A. P. Barnabas.
   (*b*) "A Psychological Diagnosis." By S. P. Adinarayan.
3. *Powerlessness of Christian Idealism before the Power of Caste in the Church* :
   "A Christian Diagnosis." By S. W. Savarimuthu.

4. *Church and Caste* : "An Evaluation of Past and Present Missionary and Church Policies and Indication of a New Positive Approach." By Principal D. Rajarigam.

5. *The Necessity of an Alternative Social Structure and the Relevance of Theological and Sociological Insights in the Development of a Realistic Alternative.* By R. W. Taylor.

6. *Christian Congregation as Involved in and Transcending Caste.* "The Church's Response to the Gospel as Power for Social Transformation." By J. Thangiah.

The Consultation then worked in two Commissions. The one dealing with *The Christian Contribution to the Nation's Search for a Casteless Pattern of Society* was chaired by Dr. S. P. Adinarayan and Mr. D. A. Thangasamy and Miss Shanti Manuel acted as Secretaries. The Commission on *The Christian* Koinonia *and Caste within the Church* was chaired by Principal J. Vedasiromani ; Rev. J. Thangiah and Rev. J. Kumaresan worked as Secretaries.

The last part of the Conference was spent in discussing and redrafting the Findings of the Commission. The Reports published in this *Bulletin* represent therefore the consensus of the Consultation.

II. On the Social, Political and Economic Trends in the Andhra Christian Community

The Consultation was held at the Andhra Christian College, Guntur, from October 2 to 6, 1958, under the joint auspices of the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, the National Christian Council and the Andhra Christian College and was convened by Dr. P. D. Devanandan, Shri Korulla Jacob and Principal T. S. Paulus. The purpose of the Consultation was to initiate a study of the social, political and economic condition of the Andhra Christian community. A Local Committee consisting of Christian members of the staff of the College with Dr. J. B. Williams as Chairman finalised the programme and local arrangements of the Consultation, and carried the main burden of organisation. Mr. V. L. Herman looked after the boarding and lodging arrangements of participants.

At this Consultation also, the first part was given to discussion of papers. Dr. A. T. Fishman spoke on the *Origins and Trends* ; Dr. J. B. Williams and Shri K. Rajaratnam read papers on the Economic Condition of the Andhra Christians ; Mr. G. L. Benny and Rev. A. B. Masilamoni on the Social Conditions ; and Messrs. J. Paulus and C. Devadanam on Political Trends. Three Commissions then produced their reports which were redrafted in the light of plenary discussions and finally approved by the whole Consultation as *a study document.* The leaders of the Commissions were as follows : (1) *Social* : Rev. B. E. Devaraj (*Chairman*), and Shri G. L. Benny (*Secretary*); (2) *Political* : Principal T. S. Paulus (*Chairman*), and Shri J. Paulus (*Co-Chairman*), and Shri C. Deva-

danam (*Secretary*); (3) *Economic* : Dr. J. B. Williams (*Chairman*), and Shri K. Rajaratnam (*Secretary*).

The Consultation has requested the Programme Committee with Dr. J. B. Williams as Chairman "to consider a method of follow-up by way of survey and study of the main trends in the Christian community as noted by the Consultation and suggest a machinery by which the Churches and Christian Institutions in Andhra Pradesh and the Andhra Christian Council and its Committees may be associated". It has also requested the Andhra Christian College "to explore the possibility of undertaking a survey of trends and conditions of the Christian community in some typical areas under the auspices of its Department of Extension and Research".

A fuller report of the Consultation with papers and findings and evaluation of the Consultation will appear later.

M. M. Thomas.

21. Rev. M. J. Ramanjulu, Baptist Theological College, Ramapatnam, Nellore Dist.
22. Rev. M. Samuel, President, Guntur Central Synod, A.E.L.C., Guntur.
23. Dr. C. H. Swavely, Bursar, Andhra Christian College, Guntur.
24. Mr. P. John Simon, Auditor, A.E.L. Church, Guntur.
25. Rev. V. Sundara Rao, President, West Godavari Synod, Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church, Bhimavaram.
26. Dr. P. V. Ravi Varma, Head Master, Ongole Boys' High School, Ongole.
27. Mr. M. M. Thomas, Associate Director, C.I.S.R.S., Panavila Jn:, Thycaud, Trivandrum.
28. Dr. M. G. Thomas, Lecturer in English, Andhra Christian College, Guntur.
29. Dr. J. B. Williams, Head of the Department of History and Economics, and Vice-Principal, Andhra Christian College, Guntur.
30. Mr. C. G. Warren, Lecturer in Politics, Andhra Christian College, Guntur.

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